



Leathercraft

4-H LEADER GUIDE

Revised 2.12.2025



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
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4-H Leathercraft Leader Guide

This guide has been developed to assist leaders of all experience levels to navigate the 4-H Leathercraft project. The creativity that can be found while working with leather is endless. We hope that this guide will help to navigate the units so you and youth with whom you work can be successful during project completion.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This revised 2025 edition of the Leathercraft Leader Guide was compiled by the following contributors.

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The 1990 contributors who did not all participate in this revision also deserve acknowledgment for the portions of their work that have been preserved. Appreciation is expressed to Jean Steinhoff, volunteer 4-H leader, Larimer County; Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Paul, volunteer 4-H leaders, Jefferson County; and Kay Orton, volunteer 4-H leader, Mesa County. Thanks also to the many leaders who sent suggestions to clarify the materials.

Special appreciation is expressed to Elktracks Studio, Weaver Leather Supply, and Tandy Leather Co. for assistance in developing the Colorado 4-H Leathercraft program and literature.



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Leader Information

Experiential Learning Process

The 4-H program utilizes a process where adult leaders ask open-ended questions that challenge youth to think. Through this inquiry, youth can propose hypotheses and determine their own solutions. The Experiential Learning Model developed by Pfeiffer and Jones (1985) and modified by 4-H includes five specific steps that can be summarized into three main processes: Do, Reflect, and Apply.

The Experiential Learning Model encourages discovery with minimal guidance from others. A situation, project or activity is undertaken for individual thought and problem solving. Minimum outside assistance is provided, but support is offered to the individual by questioning at each stage. The youth participating in an activity reflect on what they did, and then assess how what they learned can be applied to a life situation. Below are questions that might help during each stage of learning.

1) Experience (Doing)

Questions: What sources of information are available? What is possible? What do you expect to see? How is it working? What else might you try?

2) Share (Reflecting on What Occurred)

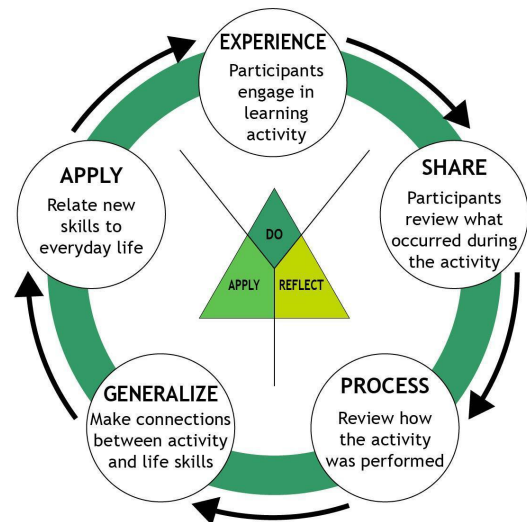
Questions: What was your goal for this project/activity when you began? What happened? What were the results? What was most difficult? How do you know? What did you learn? What surprised you? How did you share this project/activity with others?

3) Process (Reflecting on What's Important)

Questions: What problems seemed to reoccur? How did you solve them? What similar experiences have you had? How was the experience like or unlike experiences others had? Would you do anything differently? What did you learn about making decisions? What suggestions would you have for someone else who wanted to do a similar project/activity? What life skills were you developing through your project? Why are life skills important? What new questions do you have about yourself, others, and future goals?

4) Generalize (So what?)

Questions: What did you learn about yourself or about the activity? What key points have you learned? How did you decide what to do? What else could you have done? How does this relate to something else in life? Where have you faced similar challenges in your life? Where might this situation occur in the future? Why is it important to have plenty of information before making decisions? What did you learn about your own skill in communicating with others?



5) Apply (Now what?)

Questions: How does this project/activity relate to your everyday life? Why is this project/activity important to you? Where else can this skill be used? How will you use this in the future? What will you do differently after this experience? How can I make an impact? What will I create next? In what ways do people help each other learn new things? What are qualities you think are important in a leader? If someone helped or mentored you in this project, what would you tell them you learned and what difference it has made in your life? How would you express your appreciation?

Targeting Life Skills

A skill is a learned ability. Life skills are those abilities that assist individuals to lead successful, productive, and satisfying lives. In 4-H, we use the Targeting Life Skills Model to help youth become competent and prepared for adulthood. The Targeting Life Skills Model categories are based on the four H's from the 4-H clover (Head, Heart, Hands, and Health). Under each of these main categories, there are two general skill levels and eight subcategories listing specific skills youth learn in 4-H.

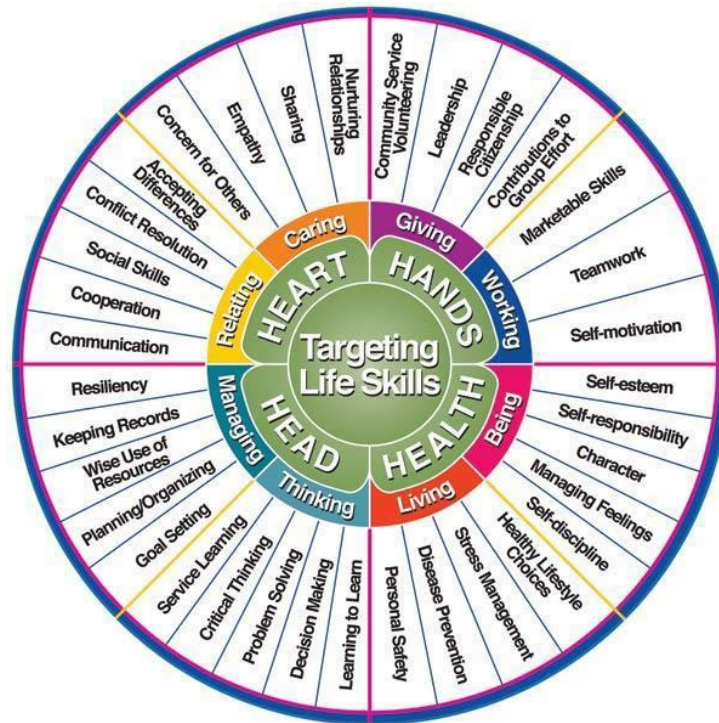


Image: Hendricks, P. (1998) "Developing Youth Curriculum Using the Targeting Life Skills Model" <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/skls.eval.htm>

The main goal in 4-H positive youth development is to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for youth to experience life skills and to be able to use them throughout a lifetime. By understanding the importance of the 4-H framework and its structure, 4-H members, parents, professionals, and leaders will know the expectations and will be able to effectively use 4-H delivery methods to help youth learn these life skills.

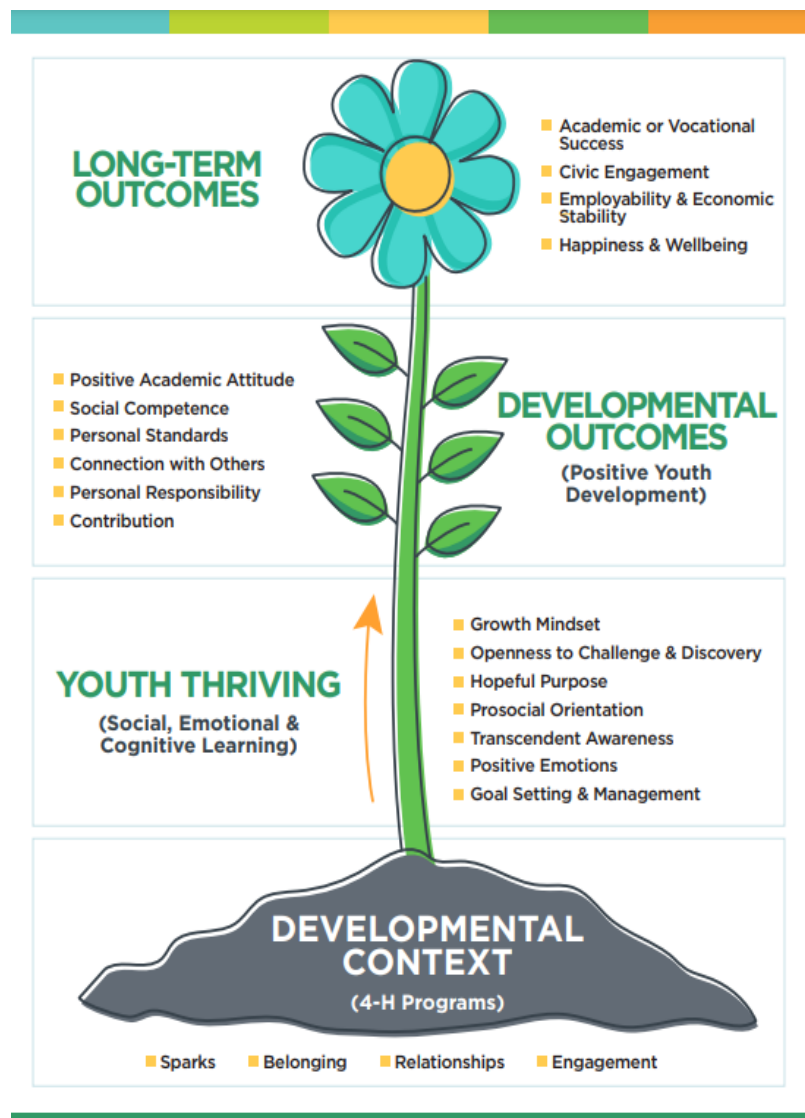
4-H Thriving Model

The 4-H Program Leaders' Working Group developed the 4-H Thriving Model to advance and support the accomplishment of the 4-H Youth Development 2025 National Strategic Plan. They describe the 4-H Thriving Model as follows:

The 4-H Thriving Model illustrates the process of positive youth development in 4-H programs by connecting high quality program settings to the promotion of youth thriving. High quality 4-H program settings provide youth a place to belong, matter, and explore their personal spark. High quality settings foster developmental relationships with youth, relationships that express care, challenge growth, and share power. These components help ensure that 4-H programs provide a nourishing developmental context – a place where youth can belong and grow.

High quality 4-H programs contribute to Positive Youth Development (PYD) through the intentional promotion of social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral habits of mind. In the 4-H Thriving Model this process of PYD is described by seven indicators of thriving: Openness to challenge and discover, growth mindset, hopeful purpose, prosocial orientation, transcendent awareness, positive emotionality and self-regulation through goal setting and management. Youth who experience high quality developmental settings in 4-H with an emphasis on these key social-emotional skills achieve key positive youth development outcomes, including academic motivation and success, social competence, high personal standards, connection with others, personal responsibility, and contribution to others through leadership and civic engagement.

Youth who achieve positive developmental outcomes are more likely to also achieve long-term outcomes marked by vocational or academic success, civic engagement, employability and economic stability and happiness and well-being. (Learn more at <https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/>.)



Introduction to Leading 4-H Leathercraft

As a volunteer leader for the 4-H Leathercraft project, you will find it helpful to have:

- an interest in young people,
- an interest in the project,
- some personal experience in leathercraft, and
- a willingness to study the leathercraft manual to determine what should be taught and what the members should learn in each unit.

As a 4-H leader in Leathercraft, you can:

- give enthusiastic leadership to a small group of members interested in this project,
- prepare yourself before each meeting so members will learn as much as possible,
- explain and demonstrate skills needed in this project, and
- help members plan their projects, check their progress, and assist them to solve problems or complete records.

If you do not have a leathercraft background, do not let this keep you from being a Leathercraft project leader. There are many helpful resources listed in this Leathercraft Leader Guide, the [4-H Leathercraft Manual](#), and the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Project Instruction Guide](#). In addition, the best resource may be the set of [instructional Leathercraft videos](#) posted on the state 4-H website. The videos accompany the chapters in the manual and teach the skills needed for projects youth might complete for their exhibit.

Older members, who have had several years' experience in leathercraft may be able to help you. Allow them to choose definite responsibilities or jobs to perform so they can realize satisfaction by reaching their own goals. The success of a 4-H project depends on its appeal to 4-H members and how closely it reflects their own interests and abilities.

Since you volunteered to serve as a leader, you obviously are interested in youth, understand their needs, want to develop their interests, and desire to help them achieve success within the limits of their abilities. That is why it is so important for you to assist youth with selecting the proper Leathercraft unit and articles that fit their present abilities and interests. Use the [Leathercraft Project Instruction Guide](#) to explain the goals and learning experiences associated with each unit.

Objectives of the 4-H Leathercraft Project

As a 4-H Leathercraft leader, you will help youth:

- learn leathercraft skills,
- appreciate the natural beauty and usefulness of leather,
- learn the principles of good design,
- become creative and original,
- learn to strive for quality in their craftsmanship.

This project complements many other projects where leather is used, such as Livestock, Horse, Clothing Construction, Artistic Clothing, Shooting Sports, and Home Design and Décor projects. Interest and enthusiasm usually is greater if there is a group of members enrolled rather than only one. However, this should not deter a single member who is interested in learning leathercraft.

Structure of the 4-H Leathercraft Project

There are nine units offered in the 4-H Leathercraft series. Each has different learning goals and requires different skills. Some require considerable time and expense. It is important that you discuss these differences with your members and help them select the unit they wish to take and the articles they make.

Leathercraft Literature

The [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) consists of fourteen chapters, references and resources, and an appendix that consists of patterns that may be used. This manual can help you with your leadership role. Leathercraft teaching films and videos can be used to plan more interesting meetings and teach specific leather skills. The leathercraft project manual is part of your leader's guide. In order to do a good job, you need to be familiar with the project manual and its suggestions.

The [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Project Guide](#) can guide you to the chapters that will help you teach each unit, know what the exhibit requirements for each unit, and give some ideas of good leather items for members to make for the project exhibit. Use the Leathercraft Project Guide, and encourage your 4-H members to read the suggested chapters of the manual that explain what they need to learn in the unit they are enrolled in.

There are 16 [4-H Leathercraft Instructional Videos](#) that are applicable to most units. Become familiar with the content of each of the videos you would like to use, so you are refreshed in various techniques before working on skills with youth. You can show the videos in segments to supplement specific skills you want to teach. In addition to the videos, feel free to share your own expertise and variations.

Choosing the Unit

Members may take any unit in the Leathercraft project for more than one year as long as they are learning a new leathercraft technique. For all units, they will need to complete the 4-H Leathercraft e-Record and present it in a sturdy binder or notebook. Find project exhibit rules for all units on in the Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Project Instruction guide or on the State 4-H website at <https://co4h.colostate.edu/statefair/StateFairExhibitReq.pdf>.

It is suggested (not required) to do Units 1-3 in order. Members are encouraged to enroll in Units 1 or 2 in their first year in Leathercraft. It is helpful to a member's progress if they learn to use the mallet and stamping tools before they add the use of a swivel knife to their abilities. Here are some suggestions:

1. When a 4-H member enrolls in Leathercraft at age 8 or 9, they should probably start in Unit 1, Creative Stamping. (Any age can take Unit 1.) The next year, they could move on to Unit 2.
2. If they are 10 or older, they could probably start in Unit 2 if they wanted to, spending a little extra time practicing using the mallet and stamping tools before they learn to use the swivel knife. It is very good training to practice a skill repeatedly. Learning the carving and stamping techniques on the samples in Unit 2 helps them perfect the

techniques. They will then use those techniques on a project of their choice to complete the Unit 2 requirements.

3. After completing Units 1 and 2, the member may enroll in any unit that meets their interests and needs. **They are not required to take Units 3 through Unit 9 in numeric order; however, it is a good idea to take Unit 3 before moving on.**

After a member has learned the basic carving and stamping techniques, it is time to branch out and learn some different techniques and styles of carving and some new ways of putting a finish on their leather. Unit 3 is a great place to advance the traditional carving techniques or learn something new offered in the unit. Because there are many things that can be learned in Unit 3, a member can enroll in Unit 3 for more than one year if they wish. They need to learn new techniques each year.

Units 4-9 may be taken in any order, and members in Units 4-9 may exhibit in more than one unit, provided the member is enrolled in and has completed the requirements of each of the units they are exhibiting in. All pictures or wall hangings in Units 4-8 that are meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not.

4. If the project uses one advanced carving technique such as traditional, figure or pictorial carving, filigree or embossing, or a lot of decorative swivel knife carving, then Unit 4 should be taken.
5. If the project just uses stamping tools such as basket weave or other stamping patterns with minimal carving, then Unit 5 should be taken.
6. If the project is mainly sewing with minimal carving or tooling such as clothing articles, then Unit 6 should be taken.
7. If the project consists of braiding, molding or sculpting leather, then Unit 7 should be taken.

Note: Units 6-Sewing Leather and 7-Braiding and Un-tooled Leather do not require previous knowledge of leather tooling or carving. Therefore, these units may be taken without previous leathercraft work experience, including Units 1 or 2.

8. If the project combines several techniques from all the different units, then Unit 8 should be taken (for example, dyeing techniques, more advanced stamping, floral carving and filigree work).
9. Unit 9 is the Making and Rebuilding Saddles unit. It is suggested and encouraged to contact a local saddle maker to assist with this project if the leader is not already a saddle maker.

Teaching Methods to Help in Project Meetings

It is a good idea at the beginning of the 4-H year to have a meeting with parents/guardians to let them know what to expect and where they might be able to help. (Parents/guardians can help 4-H members pay for projects. This may be project materials the leader is providing or that they are ordering from a leather company.)

Meeting Structure

- Most 4-H meetings start with the 4-H Pledge and the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Project meetings are different from business meetings. Project meetings focus on learning the skills and techniques they need to know and do to complete their project.
- Identify goals or objectives for the meeting at the beginning.
- Plan meeting dates and times throughout the 4-H year that work with the families you are leading.
- Follow up with families if members are not present, so you can be sure they are keeping up with their project work. A personal touch is always appreciated.
- At the end of the project meeting, have youth summarize what they learned that day.

Management Ideas

- Use your older kids to help teach the younger kids. It helps them learn and develop their leadership skills.
- Keep in mind the attention span for the age(s) of youth you are working with.
- Teach 4-H members to come to the meetings prepared with all the supplies they need.
- Have members keep a notebook or a way to save what they are doing for future reference or use.
- Have members take pictures of their work as they progress. They need at least four photos for their e-Record.
- Prepare a list (or lesson plan) of what you would like to accomplish to stay on track or remember what you wanted to teach that day.
- Sandwich the advice given to the youth, so a positive comment about the work is delivered before and after the suggestions for improvement are given. Let them know it is normal if they make a mistake. Some mistakes can be corrected.
- Stay positive, so members don't get discouraged, and help them to do their best quality work while feeling confident that they are able to do it!

Leader Tips for Each Unit

Before beginning any practice or project, make sure that everyone washes their hands. Oils, lotions, and dirt will discolor the leather. Go over setting up your workspace, having proper lighting, and casing leather each time they start working on their project. Reiterate these steps each time you work with the youth on their skills or leathercraft projects. The use of a weight or shot bag (a bag filled with BB's) to help hold their leather still can be helpful. Making a practice pattern piece either before or during each step of carving is a good idea for youth to be more comfortable with tooling a project.

Again, utilize the following resources as you plan for each unit. The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual, which includes links to appropriate videos for each chapter, can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/manuals/Leathercraft.pdf>.

The Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Instructional Video Series can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/colorado-4-h-leathercraft-instructional-videos/>.

The Leathercraft Project Instruction Guide for all units can be found at

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/projects/other/Leathercraft-ProjectGuide.pdf>.

Introduction To Leathercraft and Creative Stamping—Unit 1

Encourage members to read these chapters to find the information in the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) for Unit 1.

Chapter 1—All about Leathercraft

Chapter 2—Preparation of Leather for Stamping

Chapter 3—Using Creative Stamping Tools

Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication: Using Hole Punches

Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques: Preparing the Item for Lacing, Whip Stitch Lacing, Running Stitch Lacing, Hand Sewing

The Unit 1 Leathercraft exhibit will be two completed leather articles – one article with a creative stamping design on a single layer of leather (or one matched set of articles on a single layer of leather, with a creative stamping design) **AND** one completed article with a stamping design on at least two pieces of leather that are hand sewn together with lacing and/or thread stitching using whip stitch, running stitch, or saddle stitch.

Place the exhibit items on a board 12" x 18" x 1/8" or 1/4" (preferably pegboard) to which items are attached by means of lacing or thread, so they are less likely to be misplaced during display.

Exhibits may have only a **clear finish** applied to complete their article. **The following are not permitted in Unit 1: carving, color shading or dyeing, antiquing, or machine sewing.**

List of Recommended Tools for Unit 1

Tools suggested for beginning Unit 1 are the camouflage, veiner, pear shader, seeder, back grounder and modeling tool. **4-H members in Unit 1 may not use a swivel knife.**

Some ideas for Unit 1 projects on a single layer of leather include—bookmark, set of coasters, wrist bracelet, belt, pet collar.

Ideas for projects with at least two pieces of leather that are hand sewed together with lace and/or thread stitching include—coin purse, knife sheath/case, simple purse, wallet.

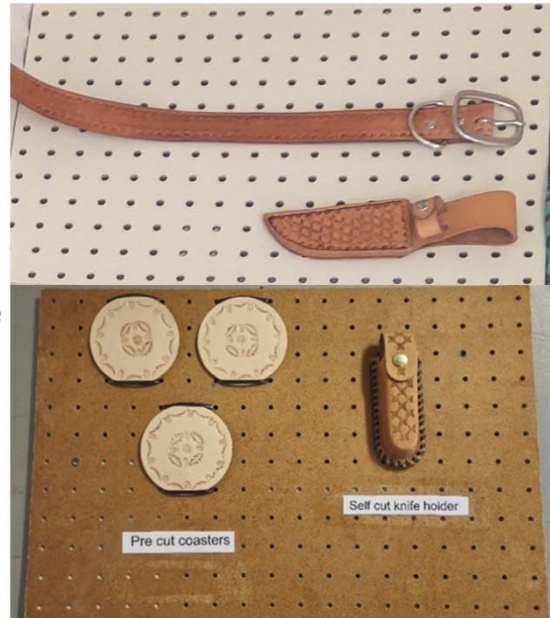
These are projects were created by 4-H members in past years.

Unit 1—Introduction to Leathercraft & Creative Stamping is the unit to take to get started in learning leathercraft. Below are several examples of some beginning stamping projects.

This project is called Creative Stamping because it is a great place to start experimenting with tools and learning different ways to make a design. It is important to practice on some scrap leather before starting on the project.

Notice that coasters are often displayed as a set of 3 or 4. A set needs to have several elements in common, for example, here the coasters are all alike, sometimes the coasters could have all the same border but maybe a different design in the middle. In order to be considered a set they need to have an element or two that are the same in each coaster.

Always encourage a student to make something they want to make and can use. They will appreciate the project more.



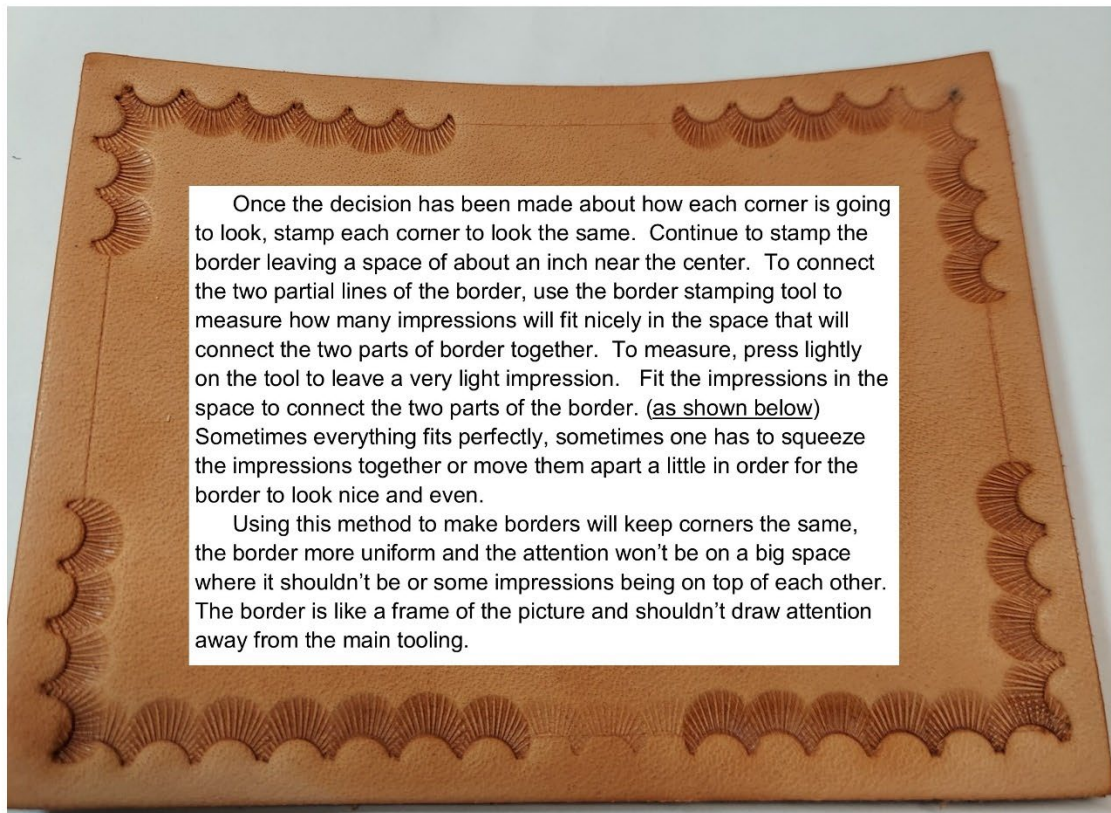
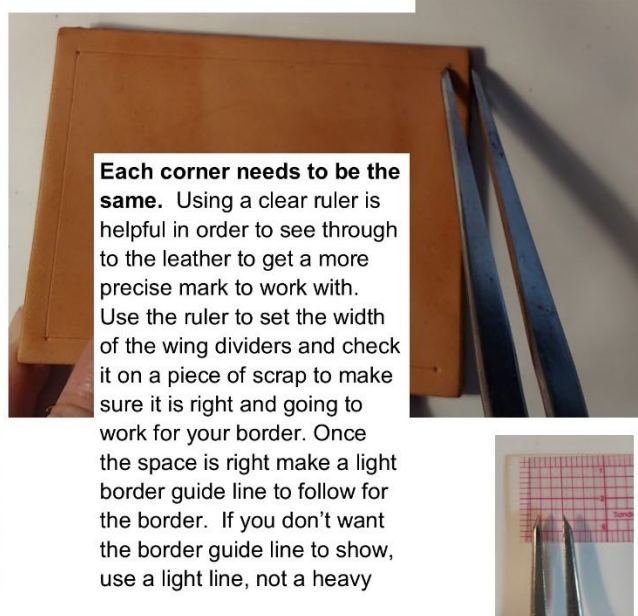
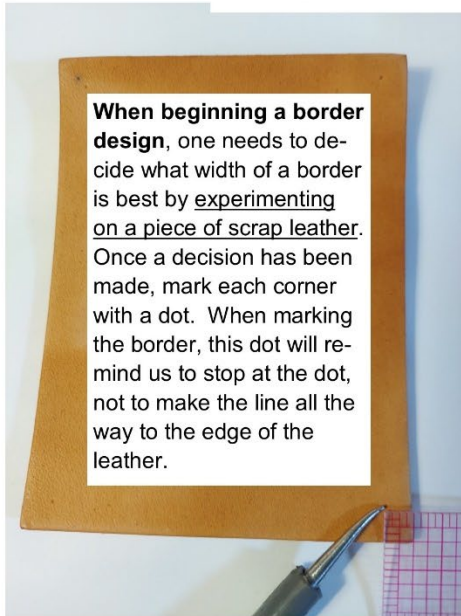
Unit 1 Teaching Tips

Here are some suggestions to assist you with teaching youth enrolled in Unit 1:

- Demonstrate the setup of a leathercraft work area and proper casing of leather. (The [first video](#) on Workspace and Stamping Tools is very helpful with this lesson.)
- Identify which stamping tools are good ones to start learning to use as a beginner. There are many to choose from, and some of the best are the basic stamping tools on page 21 of the manual.
- Help youth practice holding the tools correctly and encourage them to practice using scrap leather before starting their final project (page 23 in the manual).

- Use a clear ruler when laying out the pattern, so you see through the ruler.
- Learn how to make a border design by drawing a line on a piece of scrap leather and practice lining the stamping tool up on the line to keep it straight. (This helps the student get used to putting the tool right in the place they want the impression.) There are good illustrations on page 24 of the manual.
- Encourage students to be creative and develop their own creative patterns. There are good examples on page 25 of the manual.
- There are many stamping tools that can be used in Unit 1. The basic stamping tools are easier for young people to learn to use. Basket weave tools and 3D stamps can be used in Unit 1, but they are harder to control and might be best if the older beginners learn to use them. Those using larger stamps might need a leader or helper to help steady the stamp and keep it from bouncing. (See pages 26-28 in the manual for some help.)
- Clear finish oil can darken the leather, and that is ok. Only clear finishes can be used on Unit 1 projects.

Making borders for a creative stamping project!



Experimenting on a piece of scrap leather is a great way to find a creative design for a project.

Adding a pear shader impression along this border changes the looks of this border.



Experimenting is the best way to learn!

Add lines to make a quilted type design. A veiner is used for part of the design using quilting lines as a guide to keep the design centered. Try to make each tool impression the same depth.



Experiment with different tools.

Here the camouflage tool is added in the center of each circle.

The background tool is used in each center.

The seeder is used in each corner and some of the centers.

One of the best ways to improve stamping abilities is to practice and experiment on practice (scrap) leather!



Beginning Leather Carving—Unit 2

Encourage members to read or review these chapters to find the information in the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) for Unit 2.

Review Chapter 1—All About Leathercraft

Review Chapter 2—Preparation of Leather for Stamping

Review Chapter 3—Using Creative Stamping Tools

Chapter 4—Traditional Floral Carving and Tooling

Review Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Review Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Review Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication: Using Hole Punches

Review Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques: Basic Leathercraft Lacing, Preparing the Item for Lacing, Using Lacing Chisels, Double Loop Lacing

The Unit 2 Leathercraft exhibit will be a display board with three samples showing the steps of carving and tooling and one article, a leather item that is tooled using the steps they have learned in Unit 2. This item will need to be laced with a double loop lacing.

The exhibit board should be 12" x 18" x 1/8" or 1/4" (preferably pegboard) to which items are attached by means of lacing or thread (fishing line or clear, stretchable bead cord). All items should be labeled, and there should be proper identification attached to or marked on each item and the back of the exhibit board just in case any of the parts of the display get separated from the display.

Exhibit requirements include three samples with labels showing:

Sample 1: Use of swivel knife and camouflage tool.

Sample 2: Use of swivel knife, camouflage tool, pear shader, beveler and veiner.

Sample 3: Use of swivel knife, camouflage tool, pear shader, beveler and veiner, seeder, backgrounder, and decorative cuts.

Note: The labels should reflect the tools used for each sample. Along with the three samples, they need to exhibit one completed article using tools and skills studied in Unit 2 **with double loop lacing.**

Helpful Tips for the Unit 2 Display Board

For the samples, any floral pattern can be used as long as it uses all the required tools of Unit 2 within the design. There are three good floral patterns for beginners shown in Chapter 4 of the manual, and there are several more good beginning floral patterns in the appendix of the Leathercraft Manual. Members may choose to use a different floral pattern than what is in the manual. If a different pattern is exhibited, all the tools required in Unit 2 should be used. It is best for learning if they use the same pattern on all three samples they prepare. It is easier for the youth and helps a judge see the progression of skills learned. The size of the piece of sample leather does not matter, as long as the three samples and the article all fit on the exhibit board.

Apply a clear leather finish to complete the article and sample 3 (optional for samples 1 and 2, so one could complete samples being exhibited later and then apply a finish if they want).

A clear finish should not have any color in it. Antiques, dyes, or stains are not allowed in Unit 2. You may use clear oils, clear leather creams and conditioners, leather finish with no color, clear leather spray finish, or clear liquid leather finish.

Ideas for the completed leather article include a wallet, coin purse, small purse, knife or pliers case, credit card case, or sunglasses case.

The completed article needs to be double loop laced---some parts of a project may be laced or stitched with thread, but the majority of the project needs to be laced with double loop lacing. (Example: the top edge of the insides of a wallet is often whipstitched with lace or pre-made insides are sewn with thread)

The following are not permitted in Unit 2: pictorial carving or figure carving (realistic animal and human figures), solid color dyeing, color shading, or machine stitching.

These projects were created by 4-H members in past years.



Unit 2 Teaching Tips

Many of your questions in Unit 2 can be answered by referring to Chapter 4 in the Leathercraft Manual and watching the [4-H Leathercraft Videos](#).

It is really important for your students to have their leather cased (dampened) correctly. Review Chapter 2 in the manual! If you are in a classroom situation, you could have your students dampen their practice and/or project leather at the very first of class and put it in a plastic bag. The moisture will be soaking into their leather and will be more ready after you are finished demonstrating or talking about the next steps.

Later in their learning process, your students may want to dampen some leather and put it into a plastic bag to bring to the meeting. It will be ready when you start their instruction.

When students are working on their leather and want to take a break, encourage them to either put leather in a plastic bag or at the very least turn it over so the surface of leather is against the tooling surface, so moisture won't escape so quickly.

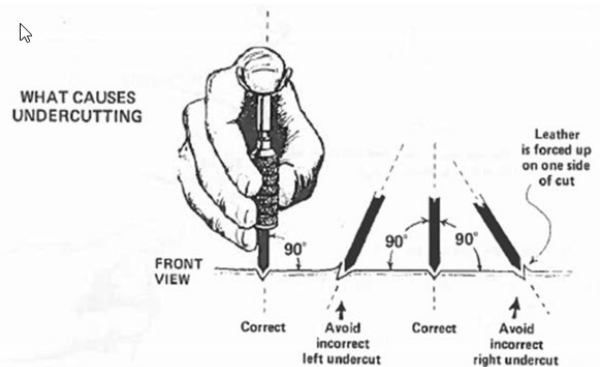
Tracing

- When tracing a pattern, have the student check to make sure they get all the lines of the pattern onto the tracing film. Then when they transfer the pattern to the leather, have them double check to make sure to get all the lines on the leather before lifting the film from the leather. To check to see if all the lines are traced, hold one side of the pattern down and lift the other side of the pattern to check the lines. Then hold the other side down and check the rest of the lines.
- Sometimes taping the film down to the work surface helps keep the pattern centered on the leather.
- Make sure the side with pencil marks is facing is up on the tracing film when the design is transferred to the leather, so pencil marks don't get transferred on to the leather.
- Have them write their name on the tracing film up in the corner or somewhere where the tracing lines won't be. When they get ready to transfer lines to the leather have them check their name. It should be right side up. If their tracing film is upside down, their name will be backwards, and they will know something is wrong so they can fix it before tracing. The name also serves as good identification for the tracing film in case they misplace it. The tracing film can be used several times.
- When teaching youth how to trace patterns, have them practice tracing on scrap leather. It's good practice to select the more difficult parts of a pattern to trace on scrap leather for extra practice on the parts that might be confusing. Maybe the whole design won't fit on the scrap leather piece, but some practicing can be done on the parts that do fit. Try to get the most out of your leather. Practice, practice, practice!

Swivel Knife

- New to this unit will be carving and the use of a swivel knife. This tool can be very challenging to younger and less experienced members. It will benefit you and the members to review this portion in the leathercraft manual.
- Keeping the knife sharp and preparing (casing/dampening) the leather is a must.

- Help youth maintain the sharpness of their swivel knife by stropping it often. Help them to recognize when their swivel knife is starting to drag (doesn't cut smoothly, maybe sticks a little in the leather), so they start to learn when to strop it on their own.
- Holding the knife properly is very important and lots of practice will help them be successful. If needed, show them a line where the knife is tilted so they can see the undercut.
- Advise members to pull the swivel knife towards themselves and not push it away.
- Try not to lift the knife in the middle of a line. If they need to, have them reposition their leather and very carefully put the blade of the swivel knife into the cut to continue the cut.
- They may be able to move the leather and hold the knife still to complete some cuts.



Use of Basic Stamping Tools

Practice is really the best way to learn how to use the basic tools. Use some scrap pieces to try out each of the tools. Pay attention to the pictures in the manual for placement of the tool impressions. On a piece of practice leather, have them practice all the steps of several of the beginning carving patterns. After some practicing with several patterns, they will probably pick out their favorite pattern. Encourage them to use a pattern they like.

Completing the Samples for the Exhibit Board

Once all the basic tools have been practiced, it is time to start completing the samples for the exhibit board.

- It works well to have members who are ready to complete the samples for the exhibit board to **prepare five pieces of leather, cut to size and ready to use.**
- On four of the pieces, have them trace the pattern onto the leather. Then use the swivel knife to cut in their design and use the camouflage tool. These are the steps to be shown on the **first sample** for the exhibit board. Help the member choose the best one to save for their first sample. Here are a few things they can look at to help choose the best one.
 1. The pattern should be traced on correctly and centered on the leather piece.
 2. The swivel knife cuts should be complete, smooth, and the appropriate depth (1/3 of the way through the leather).
 3. The camouflage tool impressions should be evenly spaced and a consistent depth.

They will want to save the best one for their first sample. Let it dry and keep it dry and clean until they are finished with the rest. The member should mark on the back of the sample which one they want to keep for the first exhibit sample.

- With the three remaining samples, use the pear shader, beveler, and veiner on each one. These are the steps for the **second sample** for the board. These steps will take the

most time so try not to rush them. Again, help them choose the best one. Here are a few things to help choose the best one.

1. The pear shading should be in the correct place on the pattern. It should be smooth and not choppy.
2. The beveling is on the correct side of the line. It should be smooth and consistent in depth.
3. The veiner should be in the correct position, spaced evenly, and a consistent depth.

Save the best one for their second sample. Let it dry and keep it dry and clean until they are finished with the rest. The member should mark on the back of the sample which one they want to keep for the second exhibit sample.

- With the two remaining samples, use the seeder, backgrounder, and decorative cuts on each one. These are the steps for the **third and final sample**. Choose the best one. Here are a few things to help choose the best one.

1. The seeds should be just barely touching each other with a consistent depth.
2. The backgrounding should be in the correct spot, smooth, and a uniform depth.
3. Decorative cuts should be smooth, uniform in depth and not quite as deep as the main swivel knife cuts. They need to go with the flow and direction of the pattern.

The member should mark on the back of the sample which one they want to keep for the third exhibit sample.

- That should be the three samples for the exhibit board. Keep them dry and clean. If your member is not happy with the samples maybe they could use the other piece of leather to redo the one they liked the least. They can always redo others if they want. After they have completed their tooled article, they may have improved their skills and could make an improved sample. Each member is different and will want a different amount of perfection.

Completing a Tooled Leather Article for the Exhibit Board

Ideas for the completed leather article include a wallet, coin purse, small purse, knife or pliers' case, credit card case, or sunglasses case.

- The leather article for Unit 2 needs to include a carved & tooled design using the tools learned in Unit 2.

What if the completed leather article for the display board doesn't use all seven of the basic tools in Unit 2?

Sometimes the floral pattern they choose does not include one or two of the tools learned in Unit 2. If the article's pattern is missing one or two tools, it is ok. (However, the pattern must be carved.) It is also ok if the pattern they choose uses one or two extra tools on their carving pattern. **They need to choose a pattern that uses most of the tools taught in Unit 2.** Your student has displayed that they know how to use all the basic tools in the three samples that accompany the leather article.

Example: This wallet is from the sample exhibit board pictured earlier. A flower center stamp was used instead of a seeder for the center of this wild rose pattern. A camouflage tool wasn't used, and the backgrounder was used more than usual.



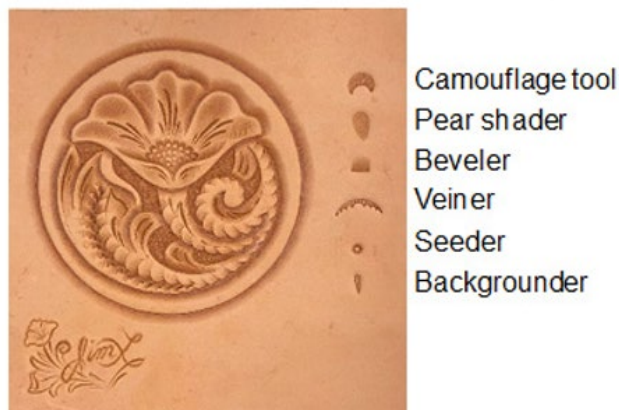
Double Loop Lacing

Some good information on double loop lacing (which is sometimes called double cordovan lacing) is found in Chapter 11 of the manual.

- When ordering kits for articles with the double loop lacing requirement, make sure the kits say lace is included, not thread or cord. You can't double loop lace with thread or cord. The pre-punched holes may be too small if the kit is only for thread or cord.
- Make sure when lacing that lace does not become twisted and that the shiny side is always up with the rough side hidden.
- When lacing try to maintain the same amount of tension on the lace to help it have a consistent tightness.
- When lacing is complete, help them learn how to "set" their lace by using a smooth faced hammer or mallet to tap the lace down on both sides to make it smooth. It will also flatten it some to make it less bulky.

Using the Leathercraft Manual for Help

- You may want to print the pages of Unit 2 that show the carving and tooling steps for your members. It is helpful to have a guide next to them as they work.
- Encourage members to have a notebook to keep their leathercraft instructions in, so they can check back to look for more instruction when they need.
- Put instruction pages in plastic page protectors so their paper won't get wet as they dampen their leather. It is helpful to have instructions close by to look at as they work.
- Tools needed for Unit 2 are a stylus or tracing tool, a swivel knife, and the basic six tools.



Intermediate Leather Carving—Unit 3

Encourage members to read these chapters to find the information in the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) for Unit 3.

Review Chapters 1-4

Chapter 5—**Carving Techniques and Styles: Inverted, Silhouette and Roughout Techniques**

Review Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Chapter 7—Coloring for Leather

Review Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication: Setting Rivets, Setting Snaps, Installing Lether Linings, Skiving Tools, Using Hole Punches

Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques—Help with Lacing

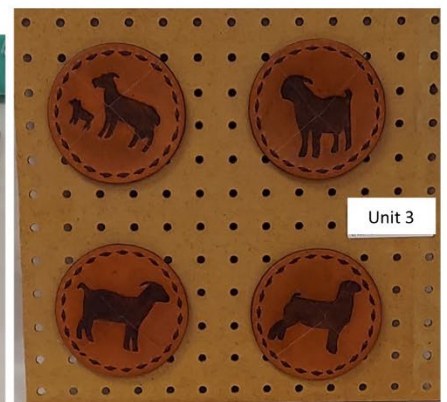
*There are a couple sample patterns that are good for Unit 3 in the appendix of the manual.

Members will make one completed article, matching set, or picture/wall hanging that includes at least one of the major skills: traditional carving, inverted carving, or silhouette carving techniques. (Note: All pictures or wall hangings meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not.)

Clear finish, staining/antiquing, two tone finishes, and background dyeing are allowed in Unit 3. No machine stitching is allowed. Any lacing and/or hand stitching may be used in this unit, though they are not required.

The following are not permitted in Unit 3: pictorial carving or figure carving (realistic animal and human figures), color shading, solid color dyeing (only background dyeing is permitted), or machine stitching.

Some ideas for Unit 3 projects include—belts, purses, bags, wallets, book covers, knife cases, gun shoulder straps, halters, pictures. There are many options for projects. Unit 3 may be taken more than one year since there are several techniques offered that one might not learn all at once. Remind youth to indicate which technique(s) they are working on that year in their e-record.



These are projects were created by 4-H members in past years.



Unit 3—These projects were created by 4-H members in past years.



Commonly Asked Questions When Choosing a Unit 3 Project

Is it ok for the Unit 3 project to include more than one of these techniques? The completed leather article will need to include at least one of the major skills: traditional carving, inverted carving, or silhouette carving techniques. The project could involve more than one major skill (example-a belt or wallet with a rose design and a name that is silhouette carved.)

What is Traditional Carving for Unit 3? Traditional Carving in Unit 3-Intermediate Carving will be using a few more difficult carving techniques. This may include more tools than were used in Unit 2 Beginning Carving with the basic seven tools. Choose a little more difficulty in the tooling pattern. It needs to be just a little more challenging than they have done before. There are many types of classical Western floral carving, so youth could focus on techniques required to do different areas' styles. See the Regional Styles section of the Leathercraft Manual.

What kind of picture/wall hanging can be done in Unit 3? The picture could be done with traditional floral carving, inverted carving, or silhouette carving techniques, **no figure or realistic carving.** The picture could be a silhouette or inverted carved animal or scene. A picture needs to be complete with a way to hang for display, whether framed or not.

What kind of lacing is used in Unit 3? Any kind of lacing or hand stitching may be used in Unit 3; however, the project does **not require** lacing or hand stitching (for example, a belt with no lacing). **A sewing machine cannot be used on the Unit 3 project.** Sometimes a kit comes with some parts of the kit already machine stitched together, which is acceptable.

What kind of finish or color can be used in Unit 3? All kinds of clear finishes can be used, a stain or antique that is tinted with color can be used, or a combination of both can be used for a two-toned finish. A paint or dye can be used to dye the background of the project (background

dying). The whole project cannot be dyed one color (**no solid color dyeing**). No color can be used for shading in Unit 3 (**no color shading**).

Unit 3 Teaching Tips

Encourage members to try several of the major skills offered in Unit 3, traditional carving, inverted carving or silhouette carving, on a piece of scrap leather. They don't have to do the whole pattern, maybe a small piece (4x4 inches) of the design just to get a feel for what is involved in that type of carving. It is good practice, and it might help them decide what kind of a project they would like to make for their final project.

Inverted and silhouette carving can be used in this unit as well. Review and practice of these new techniques can be helpful since they are vastly different from traditional carving.

It is a good idea to practice these finishes on a practice piece, if they are chosen, before using on a final project.

Applying the stain and antique can be done with several different items. Make sure to review some of those processes in the manual. In a pinch, paper towels are a very effective and inexpensive way to apply or remove the antique to a project. It is not always necessary to buy sponges and brushes to apply the finish. Sometimes a cheaper application item gives a great effect and sometimes you should try the more expensive applicator to make the project better. Always practice on scrap to make sure it is right for the project.

Advanced Leather Carving—Unit 4

Encourage members to read these chapters to find the information in the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) for Unit 4.

Review Chapters 1-4: Decorative Cuts

Chapter 5—Carving Techniques and Styles: Figure Carving, Regional Styles, Pictorial Carving, or Filigree Work.

Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Chapter 7—Coloring for Leather

Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication

Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques

*There are several sample patterns that are good for Unit 4 in the appendix of the manual.

Members will exhibit one completed article, matching set, or picture/wall hanging using one of the following techniques: advanced traditional carving, figure carving, pictorial carving, decorative swivel knife carving, embossing or filigree work.

Any lacing, hand sewing, and/or machine sewing may be used in Unit 4, though they are not required. (Note: All pictures or wall hangings meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not.) **Note: Any techniques of dyeing, color shading, stain/antiquing, and finishing may be used in units 4-9.**



These are projects created by 4-H members in past years.

Unit 4 is a great place to try some more difficult carving and tooling techniques. It is ok to combine two or even three of these

Unit 4 Advanced carving techniques on a project.

Remember: When combining several advanced techniques with geometric stamping patterns or 3-D stamping or some sewing techniques, the project probably belongs in **Unit 8 Master Leathercraft Unit.**



Commonly Asked Questions When Choosing a Unit 4 Project

What kind of projects are good projects for Unit 4? This unit should find a member enlarging the size and scope of the projects. Ideas such as bags, notebook covers, or breast collars are good ideas. Also larger, more in-depth patterns should be sought after to apply to projects. Use of a sewing machine or double loop lacing can be added to enhance a project.

Is it ok for the Unit 4 project to include more than one of these techniques? Yes, several of these techniques can be used on the project. For example:

One might make a belt with a Sheridan style carving pattern, with filigree, antique finish and buck stitching,

or

A leather binder with a pictorial carving on the front and a floral design on the back with background dyeing, the whole thing antiqued, and stitched together with machine stitching.

What is Advanced Traditional Carving for Unit 4? Advanced traditional carving would be a more difficult type of pattern, perhaps using a wider variety of tools, or a more intricate traditional floral carving.

Can leather paint be used to make the figure carving look realistic in Unit 4?

If figure carving, pictorial carving or embossing is to be colored, it needs to be entered in Unit 8! Unit 8 allows several kinds of carving, stamping, and color to be used together.

Is it ok for the Unit 4 project to include more than one of these techniques? Yes, several of these techniques can be used on the project. For example, one might make a belt with a Sheridan style pattern, with filigree, antiqued and held together with buck stitching, or a leather binder with a pictorial carving on the front and a floral design on the back with background dyeing and the whole thing antiqued, stitched together with machine stitching.

What kind of a picture/wall hanging can be done in Unit 4? Unit 4 is a great unit for a picture or wall hanging. Advanced traditional carving, figure carving, pictorial carving, decorative swivel knife carving, embossing or filigree work are all techniques that work well for a picture or wall hanging. Keep in mind the age of the member when picking the size of a picture. Very large and very small pictures are usually more difficult. A picture or wall hanging needs to be complete with a way to hang for display, whether framed or not.

What kind of finish or color can be used in Unit 4?

Any techniques of dyeing, color shading, stain/antiquing, and finishing may be used in Unit 4.

What kind of lacing is used in Unit 4? Any kind of lacing, hand sewing, and/or machine sewing may be used in Unit 4, though they are not required. For example, a picture may not have any type of lacing or sewing, or a tooled gun case or purse may have several kinds of stitching/lacing to complete it.

Unit 4—Advanced Leather Carving is the unit to take when a person has been successful in making some simpler projects and is ready for a challenge. There are several options in this unit. Advancing traditional and floral carving and tooling is a good place to start, maybe add some color or a different kind of finish. This is also a good time to learn some figure carving, filigree work, or embossing. This unit can be taken more than once. Try to learn something new each time it is taken.

A project like those at the top of the previous page might be great to get started with in Unit 4. At the bottom of the previous page are some projects that might be more of a challenge. Learning to draw your own floral patterns, how to make a pictorial carving, adding color to some of these projects, and learning about embossing are some of the more advanced techniques one can learn in Unit 4. Unit 4 can be taken more than once because there are many techniques one can learn. More than one of these techniques can be used on a project.

When a variety of techniques are used from a variety of units together on a project, the project would fit best in the Unit 8 Master Leathercraft unit.

Unit 4 Teaching Tips

Filigree Work

When completing filigree cuts, a craft knife or scalpel is very helpful to use. These knives are very sharp and should be used under the supervision of an adult. A Styrofoam backing board will help make cuts. (Review Video 5.) Sewing cutting mats are also a good cutting surface to put down when cutting.

Fine sandpaper can also be used to smooth where the filigree cuts are made so there are no wisps of leather left behind. It also makes the cuts smoother looking and easier to take a finish.

Embossing

Embossing is a technique that could be learned after mastering figure carving. If members are interested in learning about embossing, there are video resources available at the Elktracks Studio website at <https://elktrackstudio.com/collections/3-d-leather-embossing>. Our Leathercraft leaders' recommendation is that embossing takes quite a bit of time that may not be available for youth.

Advanced Stamping—Unit 5

Encourage members to read these chapters to find the information in the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) for Unit 5.

Review Chapter 1—All About Leathercraft
Chapter 2—Preparation of Leather for Stamping
Chapter 3—Using Creative Stamping Tools
Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish
Chapter 7—Coloring for Leather
Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather
Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication
Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques

In Unit 5 Advanced Stamping, members will exhibit one completed article, matching set, or picture/wall hanging using an advanced stamping design. Minimal carving is allowed for effect (i.e., use swivel knife to carve borders, letters, brands, etc.). (Note: All pictures meant to be hung need to be complete with hardware to hang for display, whether framed or not.)

Lacing, hand sewing, or machine sewing are optional in Unit 5. **Note: Any dyeing, color shading, antique/stain, and finishing techniques may be used in Units 4-9.**

Some ideas for Unit 5 projects include—belts, purses, bags, wallets, book covers, knife cases, gun shoulder straps, holsters, horse gear, chaps, pictures.

The project you choose needs to have an advanced stamping design on it. Again, minimal carving is allowed for effect (i.e., use swivel knife to carve borders, letters, brands, etc.).

Commonly Asked Questions When Choosing a Unit 5 Project

What is considered Advanced Stamping? This unit should find a member stamping a project of a larger size and scope than Unit 1 stamping. Ideas such as bags, notebook covers, or breast collars are good ideas. A larger area of stamping should be the goal for this unit. Complex or unique techniques can also be the goal of this unit, such as a rattlesnake belt that uses stamping tools to make a unique pattern not a simple one used in Unit 1. Larger projects with basket weave stamping or barb wire edging would be a good fit here.

Can a swivel knife be used in the Advanced Stamping project? Yes, most stamping designs have a border that is cut with a swivel knife and most of the time the border will be beveled before the border is stamped. Some will have a couple of borders. Another place a swivel knife and other tools can be used is for putting a letter or brand on the project. A minimal amount of carving is ok.

What kind of finish or color can be used in Unit 5 Advanced stamping? Any type of dyeing, color shading, antique/stain, and finishing techniques may be used **in units 5-9. Any coloring is acceptable.**

If the stamped project has a significant amount of carving and stamping on it, it should be entered in Unit 8, which allows several kinds of carving and stamping used together.



These are projects created by 4-H members in past years.

Unit 5—Advanced Stamping is the unit to take when a person is wanting to learn more about using creative and geometric stamping tools, and 3 D stamping tools to make a leathercraft project.



Unit 5- Any kind of lacing, hand sewing, or machine sewing may be used in the construction of the project. Leather may be finished in any suitable fashion and can include color.

In unit 5 the stamping design of the project should be the new talent a person is concentrating on learning or improving on during the year.

When a stamping design is combined with some floral carving, figure carving, or filigree work, making it a more complex project, the **Unit 8 Master Leathercraft** may be a better fit.



Sewing Leather—Unit 6

Encourage members to read these chapters to find the information in the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) for Unit 6.

Review Chapter 1—All About Leathercraft

Chapter 13—Sewing Leather

Review Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication

Members exhibit one completed article, matching set or garment made primarily by sewing leather. The focus of this unit is developing sewing construction skills. Judging will be based more on construction and sewing than on tooling.

All lacing, hand sewing, or machine sewing techniques are acceptable in Unit 6. **Note: Any techniques of dyeing, color shading, stain/antiquing, and finishing may be used in units 4-9.**

Some ideas for Unit 6 projects include—Leather garments, purses, bags, chaps, pillow covers.

Commonly Asked Questions When Choosing a Unit 6 Project

Can I have any tooling on my leather project that I'm sewing? Yes, but the focus of this unit is developing sewing construction skills. Judging will be based more on construction and sewing than on tooling.

Unit 6 Teaching Tips

This unit should find a member planning to refine their sewing skills. The project should be larger in size and scope than previous years. A garment, bag, or larger project is best for this unit. It is wise to find a pattern that is specific for working with leather. Leather is very different from working with cloth material. Different assemble techniques are needed to construct a leather sewing project. Seeking out a seamstress or a person experienced in sewing leather would be a great idea for help and advice.

If hand sewing, make sure the right needles and thread are used for the project. This will make a quality project.



These are projects created by 4-H members in past years.

Unit 6—Sewing Leather is the unit to take when a person is wanting to learn more about the construction and sewing of a leather project. Any kind of hand sewing, machine sewing, or sewing with lace, may be used in the construction of the project. Leather may be finished in any suitable fashion.

The judging of this unit will be focusing more on the construction of the project than the tooling and decoration.

There may be tooling on the project but the focus of this unit is developing sewing construction skills.

If sewing a project together is the new thing a person is learning, Unit 6 is a good Unit for this project.

If the tooling and decoration of the project is the thing a person is concentrating on learning during the year then **unit 8-Master Leathercraft** might be the better unit for this type of a project .



Braiding And Un-Tooled Leather—Unit 7

Encourage members to read these chapters to find the information in the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) for Unit 7.

Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Chapter 7—Coloring for Leather

Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication

Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques

Chapter 12—Construction and Braiding Leather

Some ideas for Unit 7 projects include—mystery braid belts, purses, bags, wallets, knife cases, gun shoulder straps, holsters, horse gear, chaps, gun scabbards, braided gear, plant hangers, wall hangings, leather sculpture, bouquet of sculpted leather flowers.

Members exhibit one completed article, matching set or picture/wall hanging constructed with un-tooled leather using one or more of these leather art techniques: Lacing, braiding, expanding, sculpting, or molding leather. (Minimal tooling for effect, such as names, initials, or brands will be accepted.)

Lacing, hand sewing, or machine sewing are optional in Unit 7. **Note: Any techniques of dyeing, color shading, stain/antiquing, and finishing may be used in Units 4-9.**

Commonly Asked Questions When Choosing a Unit 7 Project

Can I have any tooling on my Unit 7 leather project? Most of the project needs to be untooled. If one wanted to carve/stamp a name, initials, brand or minimal carving on the project for identification it would be ok, but the focus of this unit is developing construction skills. Judging will be based mostly on construction.

Can I use color in my Unit 7 project? Yes, any appropriate kind of color or finish can be used in Unit 7.

Unit 7 Teaching Tips

Refer to the resource for braiding leather in the Resource section below.



These are projects created by 4-H members in past years. **Unit 7—Braiding and untooled leather** is the unit to take when a person is wanting to make a leather project that doesn't have very much tooling on it, and where the focus of the project is developing construction skills. Here are some ideas of projects that would fit into the Braiding and untooled leathercraft project. Some other good projects for this unit would be leather braiding, mystery braiding, plant hangers, and leather sculpture. Any kind of lacing, sewing, or machine sewing may be used but are not required.



Master Leathercraft—Unit 8

Encourage members to read these chapters to find the information in the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) for Unit 8.

Review Chapters 1-4

Chapter 5—Carving Techniques and Styles

Chapter 6—Preparing Leather for a Finish

Chapter 7—Coloring for Leather

Chapter 8—Finishes for Leather

Chapter 10—Leather Fabrication

Chapter 11—Structural Assembly Techniques

In Unit 8, members exhibit one completed article, matching set, or picture/wall hanging using **multiple** leather working techniques.

Lacing, hand sewing, or machine sewing are optional in Unit 8. **Note: Any techniques of dyeing, color shading, stain/antiquing, and finishing may be used in Units 4-9.**

Unit 8 projects need to be more complex, using multiple techniques from multiple units to create the effect you want!

Some examples of using multiple leathercraft techniques on a project include:

1. A book cover with a horse head carved in an oval on the front and a geometric stamping design around the oval and on the back.
2. A carved picture of an elephant in the rain forest with a basket weave stamped frame.
3. A floral carved belt with filigree around the name with buckstitching.
4. A purse with basket stamping and an embossed, colored, horse head on the front flap.
5. A belt with silhouette carved horses and a filigreed name on the back of the belt.
6. A sewn leather vest with a tooled yoke.

The combinations of techniques are endless!

Commonly Asked Questions When Choosing a Unit 8 Project

What does a “Master Leather Project” mean? When a person has learned several leather working techniques and has gotten good at them, they can say they “mastered” those techniques. They practiced enough to become good at them. Unit 8 is a unit to combine those techniques to make a more complex project. A variety of mastered skills should be combined in the project for this unit.

Can I add color shading or leather paint to my project in Unit 8? Yes, in fact Unit 8 is the best unit to combine color and any kind of tooling together in a project. Any type of appropriate color and finish are acceptable in this unit.

Unit 8 Teaching Tips

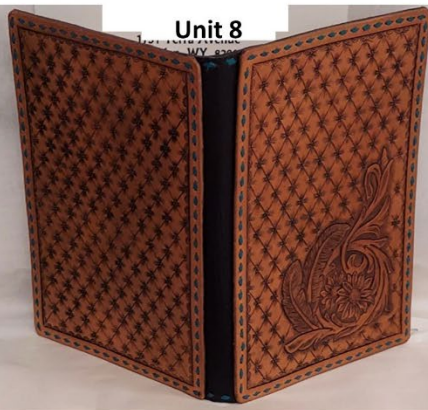
When shaded color is going to be used on anything figure carved, pictorial carved, or floral, then the project would be a better fit in Unit 8 for judging.



These are projects created by 4-H members in past years. **Unit 8—Master Leathercraft** is the Unit to take when a person is wanting to make a project that includes several techniques previously learned on projects they have made in the past. Here are some ideas of projects that would fit into the Master leathercraft project.



A junior or intermediate aged person will need to choose a project that contains techniques that are age appropriate. The small purse above includes the use of stamping tools, bevelers, antique finish, machine stitching, and rivet setting and might be suitable for a younger member. The small notebook cover uses figure carving, stamping, lacing, antique finish. The bottom row uses floral carving, figure carving, geometric stamping, some color on the project, making them all good project ideas for Unit 8. There is no limit to the combinations of techniques.



Making And Rebuilding Saddles—Unit 9

Encourage members to read these chapters to find the information in the [Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual](#) for Unit 9.

Chapter 14—Making and Rebuilding Saddles

Members exhibit one completed saddle (a new build or rebuild of existing saddle). The leather may be either tooled or un-tooled and may be finished in any suitable fashion.

All lacing, hand sewing, or machine sewing techniques are acceptable in Unit 9. **Note: Any techniques of dyeing, color shading, stain/antiquing, and finishing may be used in units 4-9.**

The Leathercraft leaders' recommendation is to help youth find a saddle maker to assist them in learning more about saddle making and/or rebuilding saddles. One resource for finding a saddle maker is the Colorado Saddle Makers Association. Their website is <https://coloradosaddlemakers.org/>.



Western Saddle
made by a
4-H member

Carved and
basket stamped seat
with rawhide cantle
binding

Some carving on
fenders

Rear Jockeys
fully carved and
basket stamped



Western Saddle
made by a
4-H member

Rough out seat with
Cheyenne roll cantle
binding

Carved swells

Some carving on
Fenders

Rear jockeys
fully carved

Partially stamped seat with a
straight up regular cantle binding

No carving on swells

Basket stamped fenders

Rear jockeys fully stamped



Western
Saddle
made by a
4-H member

What should a person do to get started in making a saddle?

Learn all you can about leather working first. Study the parts of saddles, read books about saddle making and reach out to someone who knows how to make saddles for guidance. It is a big job to make a saddle and young people don't always have the amount of time or expertise available to them for this scope of a project. They can learn all they can about leather working and when they are ready, find a saddle making school or saddle maker willing to help them learn.

Look at the References and Resources section of the Leathercraft manual to find resources to help teach this unit. *The Stohlman Encyclopedia of Saddle Making*, Al and Ann Stohlman (1993) is a great resource to help guide 4-H members in saddle making.

Resources to Help You Teach Leathercraft

There are many other resources available, but here are a few we recommend. Some of these are used or mentioned in the Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Manual and some are in addition to the manual. The Tandy Leathercraft Library at <https://tandy-leather.com/blogs/leathercraft-library> is a good place to look if you are not able to find something you need from this list.

Books and Patterns in Print

- Al Stohlman's Top 20 Tracing and photo-carve patterns for twenty billfold and wallet designs. Most include figure carving and filigree work. Step-by-step instructions for filigree, saddle stitching and lacing also are included--plus three alphabets. <https://tandy-leather.com/products/stohlman-top-20-patterns-book>
- Art of Hand Sewing Leather, The Contains complete, easy-to-follow instructions for a variety of stitches and information about tools and materials needed for professional results. For beginners and experienced leathercrafters who want to learn to sew leather like an expert. By Al Stohlman. [The Art of Hand Sewing Leather: Stohlman, Al: 9781892214911: Amazon.com: Books](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9781892214911)
- Art of Making Leather Cases Contains step-by-step directions to make cases for knives, cameras, axes, calculators, flashlights, pliers, and CB walkie-talkies. Volume 1, 120 pages; Volume 2, 132 pages; Volume 3, 116 pages. All by Al Stohlman. [The Art of Making Leather Cases — Tandy Leather, Inc.](https://www.tandy-leather.com/products/art-of-making-leather-cases)
- Belts Galore Contains detailed photos, illustrations, tracing and carving patterns, plus over 70 designs. By Al Stohlman. [Belts Galore Book — Tandy Leather, Inc.](https://www.tandy-leather.com/products/belts-galore-book)
- Braiding and Lacing for Fun Learn to make belts, bracelets, earrings, bridles--a multitude of unique projects. Dozens of ways to use decorative lacing and braiding are shown. [Braiding & Lacing For Fun Book — Tandy Leather, Inc.](https://www.tandy-leather.com/products/braiding-lacing-for-fun-book)
- Coloring Leather Fifty-three full-color pages show everything you'll need to know about the art of dyeing leather and leatherwork. Learn about cross-dyeing, mixing, tools, brushing techniques and tips on shading and staining. Includes detailed illustrations and dye mixing charts. [Coloring Leather Book — Tandy Leather, Inc.](https://www.tandy-leather.com/products/coloring-leather-book)
- How to Buckstitch Detailed descriptions of buckstitching techniques for handbags, belts, billfolds and buckles. Patterns for all the projects featured are included as a special bonus. By Al Stohlman. [How To Buckstitch Book — Tandy Leather, Inc.](https://www.tandy-leather.com/products/how-to-buckstitch-book)
- How to Carve Leather Begins with fundamentals and then gives more than sixty patterns

to create beautiful hand-tooled handbags, billfolds, key cases and belts. Plenty of alternate figures, scrolls and flowers allow you to give the designs your own touch. Also includes dye charts and six alphabets. By Al Stohlman. [How To Carve Leather Book — Tandy Leather, Inc.](#)

- How to Lace Step-by-step instructions help with fifteen different methods of lacing. Ranges from simple stitches to more complicated styles. Includes saddle, hand and buck stitching. 158 illustrations plus dozens of hints and tips for perfect lacing. [How To Lace Book — Tandy Leather, Inc.](#)
- How to Make Cowboy Horse Gear Instructions for braided reins and braided headstalls. Includes a section on how to make a western saddle. By Bruce Grant. <https://www.amazon.com/How-Make-Cowboy-Horse-Gear/dp/B000LZ9PRS>
- How to Make Holsters Holster construction and pattern making with full-size tracing patterns. Describes tools needed and their uses. By Al Stohlman. [How To Make Holsters Book — Tandy Leather, Inc.](#)
- Leather Braiding Instructions for handbags, bridles, gun cases, cane handles and quirts. Also a glossary that explains 784 braiding terms. By Bruce Grant. [Leather Braiding Book — Tandy Leather, Inc.](#)
- Leather Craft Handbook, The this book covers the basics of pattern transfer, stamping, carving, coloring, staining, dyeing, lacing, stitching, hardware setting, and belt making. Written by Tony and Kay Laier. [The Leather Craft Handbook — Tandy Leather, Inc.](#)
- Leatherwork Manual Tools and techniques of leather carving, stamping and assembly. Outlines dyeing and finishing. Includes complete instructions and patterns for making a hand-tooled key case, billfold and handbag. [Leatherwork Manual — Tandy Leather, Inc.](#)
- Lucky Seven Step-by-step instructions to make a wallet that shows how to use tools and materials. Gives 17 tooling designs with tracing and photo-carve patterns. [Lucky 7 Book — Tandy Leather International](#)
- Making and Repairing Western Saddles Build a saddle from scratch. Repair and restore older saddles. By Dave Jones. [Making and Repairing Western Saddles: Jones, Dave: 9780668049061: Amazon.com: Books](#)
- Projects and Designs Patterns and designs for beginners and experts. By Al Stohlman. 80 pages. [Projects & Designs Book — Tandy Leather, Inc.](#)

Downloadable e-Books and Patterns

Art of Embossing Leather "State-of-the-art" embossing methods, leather plug techniques, and techniques for raising a

design and creating a multi-dimensional pattern. By Al and Ann Stohlman. <https://tandy-leather.com/blogs/leathercraft-library/the-art-of-embossing-leather-by-al-and-ann-stohlman>

Creative Belt Stamping How to create 22 intricate designs using leather stamping tools. Step-by-step instructions for sizing belts and five dyeing and finishing techniques. By Paul Burnett. [Creative Belt Stamping — Tandy Leather, Inc.](#)

Free Patterns from Elktracks Studio A collection of over 150 different leather patterns available for free. <https://elktracksstudio.com/collections/free-patterns>

Sandal Making Basic techniques plus 12 styles of fashionable leather sandals. Fully-illustrated directions, time and trouble-saving tips, and two videos accompanying the e-book. <https://tandy-leather.com/blogs/leathercraft-library/sandal-making>

Stamping Step Three Advanced stamping patterns for dozens of belts, wallets and more. [Stamping Step Three — Tandy Leather, Inc.](#)

Video Resources

Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Video Library

With Jim Linnell from [Elktracks Studio](#), this 16-episode video library is designed to accompany the Colorado 4-H Leathercraft manual and covers skills taught in each chapter and unit of the project. <https://co4h.colostate.edu/colorado-4-h-leathercraft-instructional-videos/>

Leathercraft Basics, Elktracks Studio (free video): <https://elktracksstudio.com/collections/videos/products/beginner-leatherworking>

Videos from Tandy Leather, Inc.

Used in Chapter 6 - Preparing Leather for a Finish:

[How To Finish Exposed Edges On Leather](#) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTzT8PynuKk>

Used in Chapter 10 - Leather Fabrication:

[How To Set a Copper Rivet](#)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8Y1k5HKX0o&list=PL2v0zL3aZty8wJ7tcYTLLTrkFkEGXae0V&index=2>

[How To Set A Rivet In Leather](#)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQz11_LNcmw

[Setting Snap Fasteners On Leather](#)
<https://youtu.be/mwBNL6lluLM>

[Using EcoWeld Water Based Contact Adhesives On Leather](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkNmYoYITqw)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkNmYoYITqw>

[How To Use The Mini Punch Set on Leather](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey29TOjmWqc&list=PL330E95D65DA4BA68&index=129)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey29TOjmWqc&list=PL330E95D65DA4BA68&index=129>

[How To Use A Safety Beveler On Leather](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7Xsl-lokGw&list=PL330E95D65DA4BA68&index=131)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7Xsl-lokGw&list=PL330E95D65DA4BA68&index=131>

Used in Chapter 11 - Techniques of Structural Assembly:

[Leather Lacing Techniques](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJtbthWGn3U&list=PL2v0zL3aZty-RPep7sBL6AB6gquOi3ZZ4&index=4)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJtbthWGn3U&list=PL2v0zL3aZty-RPep7sBL6AB6gquOi3ZZ4&index=4>

[Learning Leathercraft with Jim Linnell – Lesson 13: Double Loop Lacing](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIpanSwuy4o&list=PL2v0zL3aZty-xboVhml3Z5SKuWkumtzaM&index=14)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIpanSwuy4o&list=PL2v0zL3aZty-xboVhml3Z5SKuWkumtzaM&index=14>

[Hand Stitching Leather Techniques](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj3BRWO7kuo&list=PL2v0zL3aZty-RPep7sBL6AB6gquOi3ZZ4&index=3)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj3BRWO7kuo&list=PL2v0zL3aZty-RPep7sBL6AB6gquOi3ZZ4&index=3>

Used in Chapter 12 - Construction and Braiding Leather:

[Mystery Braid Leather Cuff Tutorial](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41gFlbhYaM0)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41gFlbhYaM0>

Weaver Leather Supply Videos

Used in Chapter 11 - Techniques of Structural Assembly:

[The Leather Element: How to Set Rivets](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WefWhhi7Fzk)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WefWhhi7Fzk>

Used in Chapter 12 - Construction and Braiding Leather:

[Leather Mystery Braid Cuff](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCEC4d-KaQU)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCEC4d-KaQU>

Kay Orton Instructional Videos

Beginning Leather Stamping: <https://youtu.be/nTvSh8RwcEk>
Beginning Leather Carving: <https://youtu.be/8Y7KFwwpVKA>
Intermediate Inverted Carving: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aISaKWlwU8E>
Intermediate Silhouette Carving: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tdd9VOtmOk>

Patterns for Kay Orton Videos

The patterns that follow accompany the Kay Orton instructional videos, so members can use the patterns while following along with the instructions in the videos.

Beginning Leather Stamping with Kay Orton

(Use this page with the Beginning Leather Stamping video)

The tools we are using here are five of the seven basic leather craft tools from Tandy Leather Company. There are many leather craft tool makers and many sizes of these basic tools so your tools may look a little different than the tools pictured here and in the video and that is ok. Be creative and try new things.

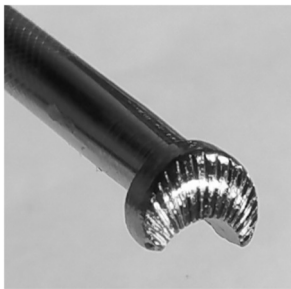
Supplies you will need

A hard surface—A piece of marble or granite is best

A spray bottle for water or a sponge & water

Vegetable tanned Leather (tooling leather)

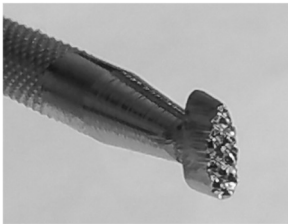
Leather tools: A mallet, tracing tool, ruler or wing dividers and stamping tools.



Camouflage tool



Seeder



Backgrounder



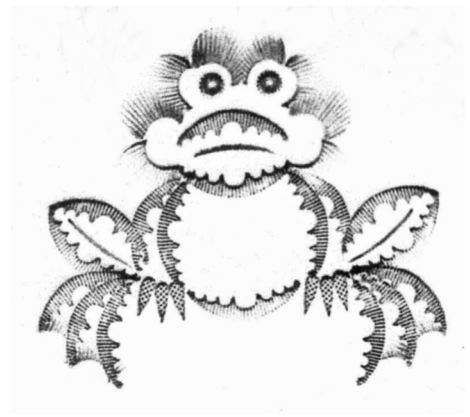
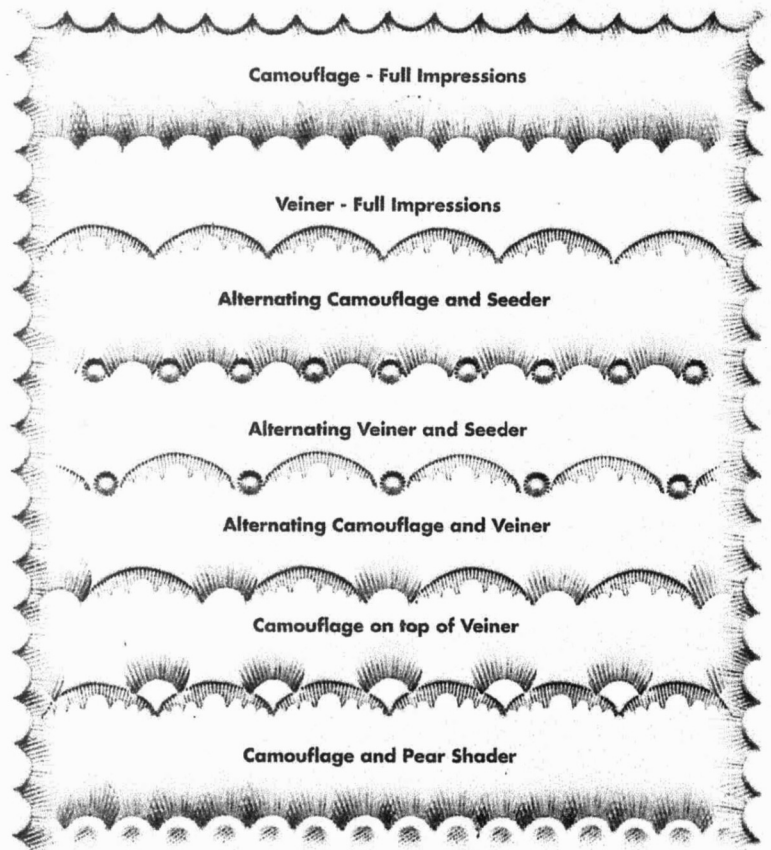
Veiner



Pear Shader—checked or smooth

HOW TO STAMP BORDERS

These are just a few border design ideas. There are hundreds of possible combinations. Experiment!



2-Beginning Leather Carving with Kay Orton

(Use this page with the Beginning Leather Carving video)

The tools we are using here are the seven basic leather craft tools from Tandy Leather Company. There are many leather craft tool makers and many sizes of these basic tools so your tools may look a little different than the tools pictured here and in the video. That is ok. The size of the tool will need to vary with the size of the pattern. This pattern works best with medium sized basic tools.

Supplies you will need—A hard surface—A piece of marble or granite is best, A spray bottle for water or a sponge & water, Vegetable tanned Leather (tooling leather) Leather tools, a mallet, tracing tool, tracing film, pencil to copy pattern, the tracing pattern



Tracing Stylus



Modeling tool for tracing- with a spoon on one end for modeling or molding leather



Swivel Knife



Camoflage tool



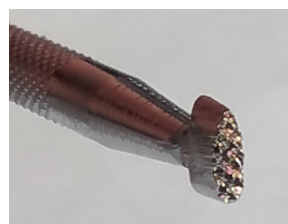
Pear Shader—checked or smooth



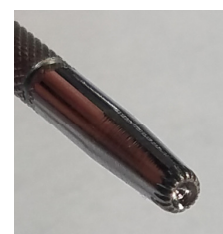
checked beveler or smooth beveler



Veiner

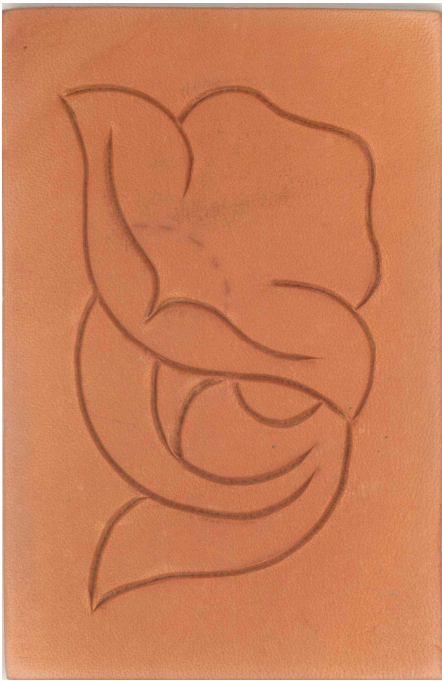


Backgrounder



Seeder

Small flower & leaves— —A carving pattern that could be used in Unit 2

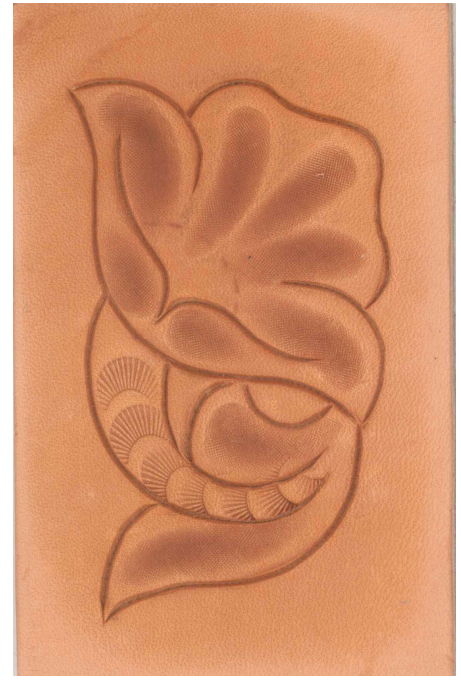


Tracing pattern

Use of swivel knife

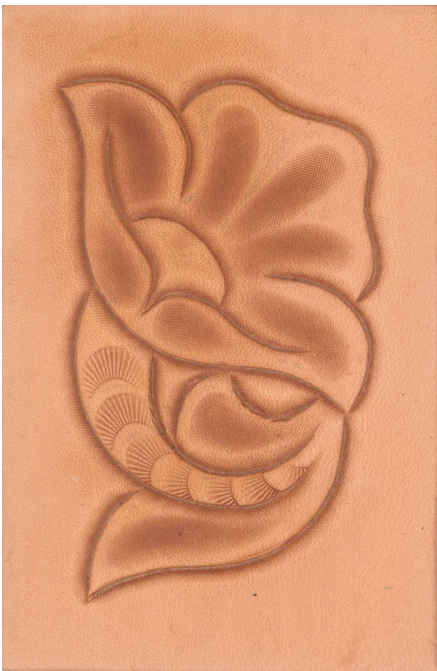


Use of camouflage tool

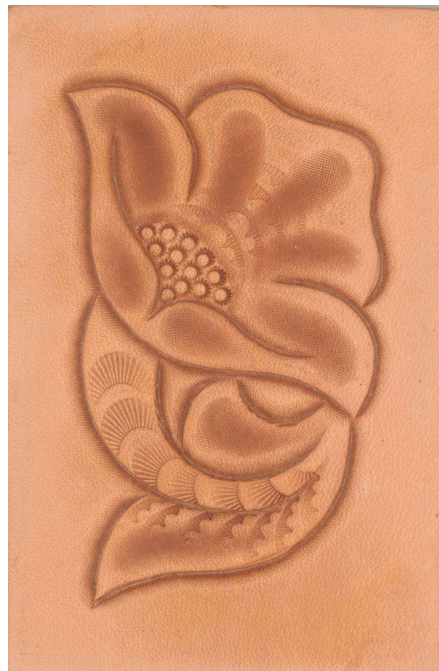


Use of pear shader

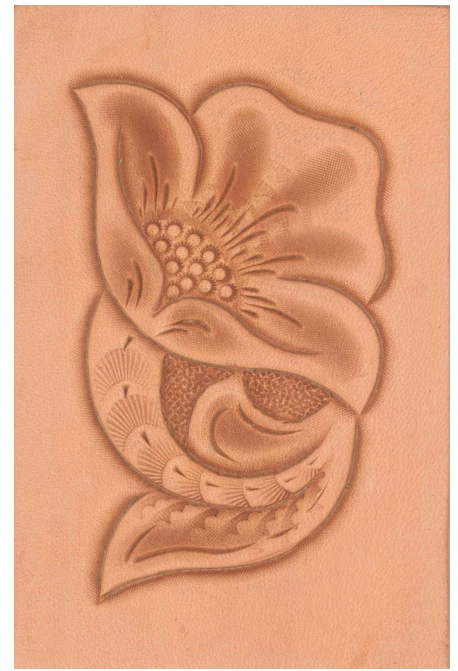
The size of this pattern is 2 1/4 inches x 3 1/2 inches



Use of beveler



Use of veiner & seeder



Use of backgrounder

4-H exhibit Unit 2 requirements

Sample 1—Swivel Knife & camouflage

Sample 2— Steps used in Sample 1 and pear shader, beveling & veiner

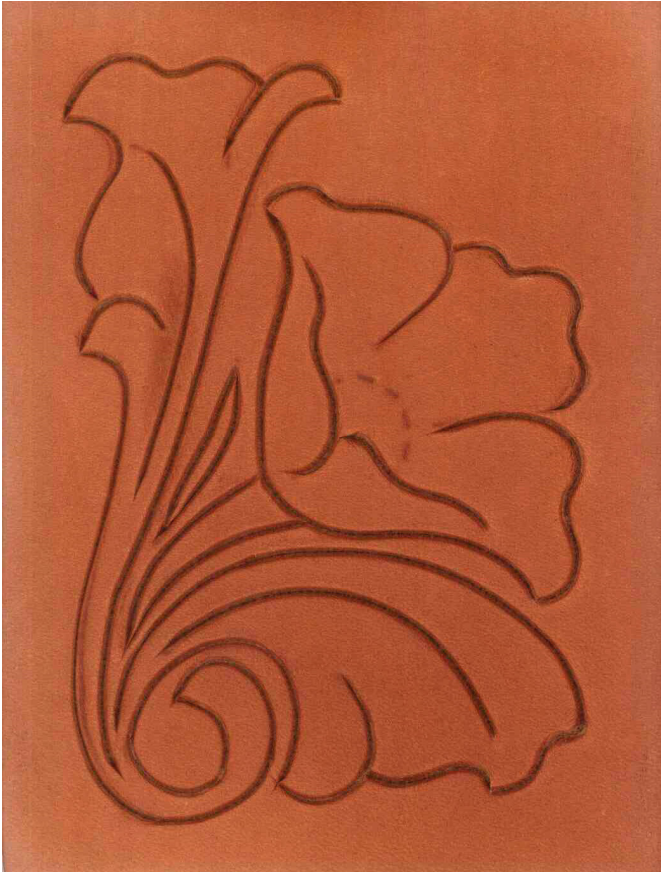
Sample 3— Steps used in sample 1 & 2 and seeder, backgrounder, & Decorative cuts

3-Intermediate Leather Inverted Carving

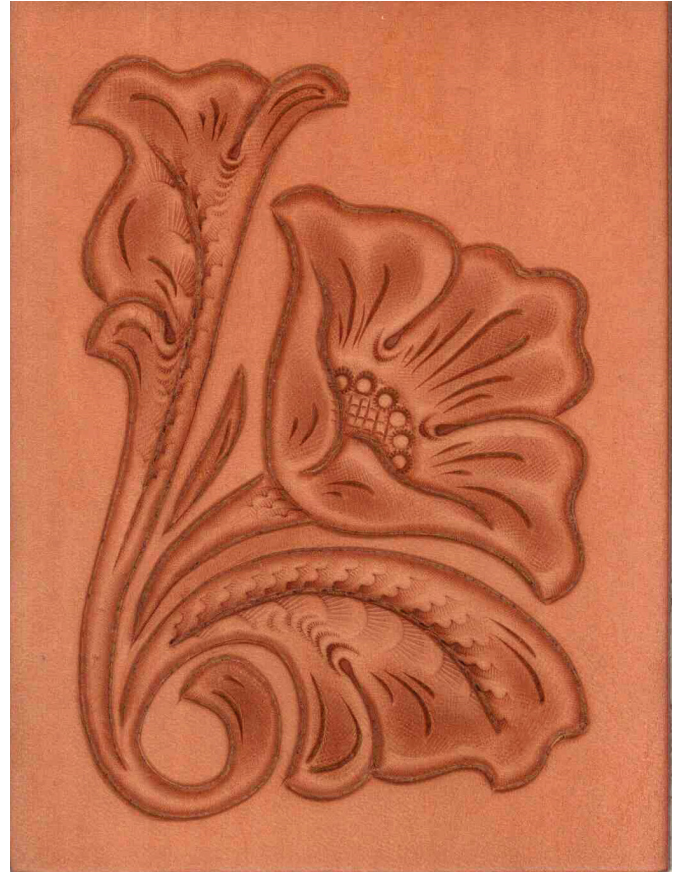
This is the pattern to be used with the

Learning Leather Craft with Kay Orton

3-Intermediate Leather Inverted Carving DVD



Tracing pattern



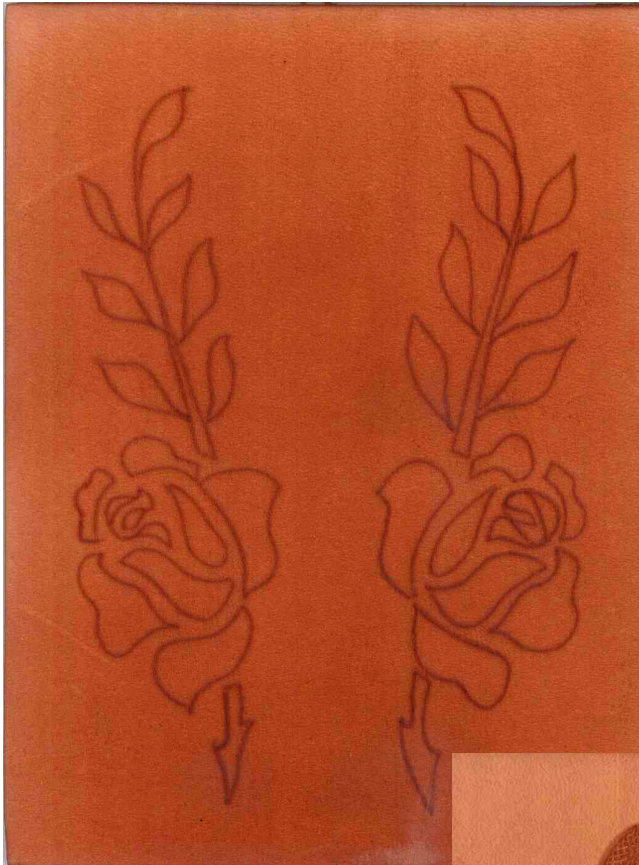
Completed

This pattern was taken from the **INVERTED LEATHER CARVING** book by Al Stohlman.

This book has many patterns in it and is a really great resource

for those learning Leather Craft!

3-Intermediate Leather Silhouette Carving



This is the pattern to be used with the **Learning Leather Craft with Kay Orton**

3-Intermediate Leather Silhouette Carving DVD

