



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The National Archives 2020 Virtual Fourth of July Craft Activities

QUILL PEN AND INK

MATERIALS NEEDED:

PEN

- Large wing feathers (A pack of plain turkey or goose quill feathers can be purchased at craft stores). Try to find feathers that are about 12 inches long or more, with a thick shaft.
- A knife to cut the correct angle on the feather shaft
- Cutting board
- Marker
- Tweezers

INK

- Use 1/2 cup fresh berries or thawed frozen berries
- Wash them through a strainer so that you get pulp-free juice.
- Add 1/2 teaspoon of vinegar (to hold color) and 1/2 teaspoon salt (as a preservative) and mix well.
- You can use a glass baby food jar as your 'inkwell', if you have one.

INSTRUCTIONS (Please note - these activities include working with sharp objects. Creation of crafts should only be done in the supervision of adults)

1. Select your feather. You need a feather long enough to hold comfortably, with a sturdy shaft (the spine of the feather). You can leave the feather as is, or trim the sides of the feather for several inches, to leave more room for a better grip.
2. Follow the natural curve of the feather. You want your writing point to aim downward.
3. Take your marker and make a dot at the point where you'd like the writing tip to be. Place your marked feather on a cutting board. With a sharp knife, cut the end of the quill at a slant less than 45 degrees.
4. Take the tweezers and clean out any materials left in the cut shaft.

5. Dip your new quill pen into your ink.

6. Have fun writing with your new pen!