

BACKSTRAP WEAVING BY REBECCA HINSON

(HISTORY/NONFICTION)

Questions for *Backstrap Weaving* by Rebecca Hinson

LEVEL 1: What does it say?

General Understanding

- How old is the tradition of backstrap weaving?
- What makes this type of weaving so intricate?

Key Details

- What details does the author use to explain the processes of creating yard and dyes?
- What information can an expert infer from examining a weaving?
- Explain the spiritual significance of weaving.

LEVEL 2: How does it work?

Vocabulary

- Determine the meaning of loom, magnificent, fleece, dye, extract, complexity, civilization, and ancestors.

Structure

- *Backstrap Weaving* addresses the process of creating a patterned weaving. *Quilting* by the same author addresses fabric quilt blocks which create a pattern. How does the author structure each book in regards to the physical process, interpretation of each design, and the impact these traditions have on the lives of the artists?

Author's Craft

- Analyze information below from www.educationandmore.org

The backstrap loom is used on a daily basis, in many parts of Guatemala by Mayan women, to weave fabric for their clothing and other needed household textiles such as shawls, baby wraps, tablecloths, washcloths, and towels.

The looms are simple. Typically they have six to seven rods which are often handmade by the weaver. A backstrap loom is easily portable because it can simply be rolled up and laid aside when not in use. The back rod is tied to a tree or post while weaving and the other end has a strap that encircles the waist or backside. The weaver can move back or forward to produce the needed tension. The backstrap weaver usually sits on the ground or on a small stool.

The backstrap loom, also known as the belt loom or telar de cinteron, can make different widths of fabric depending of the width of the rods. Guatemalan artisan weavers can weave as narrow as a belt or as wide as 26 inches. If a cloth needs to be wider, two pieces are joined together with heavy embroidery stitches. An example of this would be the corte (the skirt) of the Mayan women.

- What is similar and different about the point of view of this article and *Backstrap Weaving*.

LEVEL 3: What does it mean?

Author's Purpose

- The author states that the dyes and yarns of the Maya are the basis of their magnificent weavings. What supporting evidence does she give?
- What points does the author make which support her claim that a weaving tells the personal story of each weaver?

Intertextual Connections

- Draw on information from *Backstrap Weaving* and from <https://backstrapweaving.wordpress.com/backstrap-basics> (below) to create a description of the backstrap loom.

Basic, crude, and primitive are all words that may spring to mind when thinking of the humble backstrap loom. However, some of history's most beautiful and complex textiles were woven on this simple arrangement of sticks.

The most frequent comments I hear when I pull out my backstrap rods is "All those sticks! Where do they go and what in the world do they do?" The puzzling collection of sticks and tangle of yarn miraculously spring to life and transform themselves into a loom when the weaver dons the backstrap, attaches herself to the loom bar, tensions the warps, and starts to weave. Many of its secrets have been revealed to me in the homes, hearts, and hands of my weaving teachers.

LEVEL 4: What does it inspire you to do?

Opinion with Evidence or Argument

- Integrate information from several sources on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

The weaver on the cover of *Backstrap Weaving*, Pedro Andres Juan, spins his yarn using a drop spindle. Integrate information from the following links to give an explanation of the process.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKAJTKvl0nE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7R0Lb1qA7kE&t=294s>