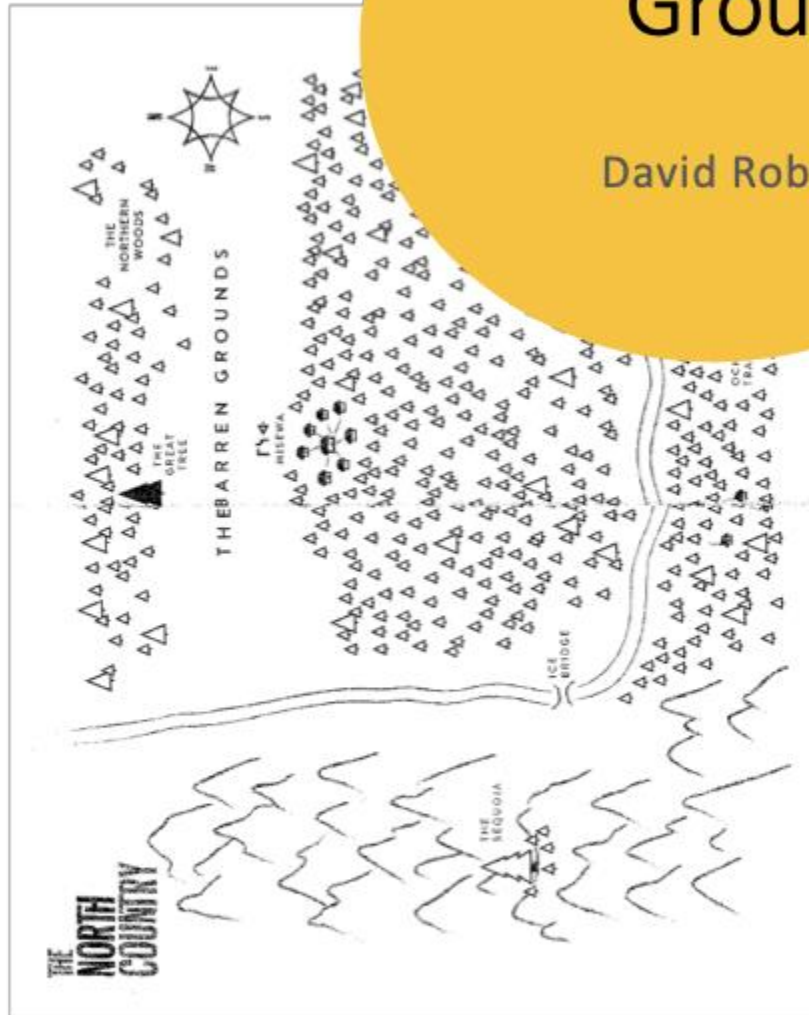


The Barren Grounds

David Robertson



**Langley Read Aloud
Teacher Resource Guide**

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Introduction:

Purpose:

This Teacher Resource Guide is intended to support and inspire teachers and students in the Langley School District on their reading journey of *The Barren Grounds* by David Robertson.

This guide is deliberate in addressing the [Calls to Action](#) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, specifically the call to “integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms (clause 62) and “build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect” (clause 63).

Teaching Strategies:

Using the model of the Global Read Aloud and adapting it to our district’s context – we endeavoured to provide diverse and varied opportunities for teachers to engage with this story. Rooted in the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) and supplemented with wide-ranging and distinct Indigenous voices, we chose to include many different Indigenous worldviews and knowledge systems throughout this guide to highlight the depth and breadth of Indigenous knowledge. Please see the Annotated Resource List for information on resources and voices throughout the guide. We have also created a list of strategies and resources at the beginning of this guide to create structures within the class that support not only what is being taught but *how* it is being taught. This is the direct and intentional modelling of Indigenous teaching methods.

Organization:

This Teacher Resource Guide is organized into seven sections. The first is a recommended Opening Activity to set up classroom systems and situate the text in Indigenous worldviews. The next six sections follow the six week Read Aloud schedule and are paired with a FPPL and a theme that connects to Indigenous pedagogy:

Opening Activity: [Looking at the Stars](#)

Section 1: [Belonging](#) (start – p53)

Section 2: [Land & Place](#) (p54 – p96)

Section 3: [Responsibility](#) (p97 – p142)

Section 4: [Teachings](#) (p143 – p183)

Section 5: [Community Consciousness](#) (p184 – p220)

Section 6: [Identity](#) (p221 – p247)

Support materials for each section, are included directly within each section. This may include graphic organizers, supplementary materials and excerpts from *The Barren Grounds* itself. We have also tried to hyperlink additional resources for teacher use. All activities and resources are included as suggestions. Teachers are encouraged to adapt and find meaning for their own classrooms and student population.

Formatting Details:

We have also used the **Note for teachers** as a flag throughout this guide, to identify an explicit idea, concept, intention or sensitive piece of content. Please be mindful of this formatting choice throughout the guide. Anything that is in green within the resource guide is because it is a quote or piece of information from an Indigenous voice, knowledge system or represents Indigenous pedagogy. This is intentional to point out and draw attention to this content.

A note on the Creation:

A group of Langley teachers met throughout the Winter & Spring of 2021, over TEAMS, to read and discuss the power of Indigenous story in our classrooms. Off the sides of their desks, they worked to co-create, edit, discuss, and enhance this resource. This is the product. We acknowledge this guide is by no means complete but the beginning of our collective understanding of how to thoughtfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in our Langley Schools.

We know Langley teachers will take this resource and build on it, making it their own. We look forward to ripples of this work throughout the district.

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Teacher Strategies

Building Cultural Context:

Indigenous author Chelsea Vowel writes:

“Sometimes what you are reading simply will not make sense to you because you lack the cultural context. That does not mean you should avoid these stories. It just means you may have to put a bit more work into getting the full benefit of them than you would with stories that come from a context you are already completely familiar with.”

Chelsea Vowel, **Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Issues in Canada** (pg 98)

This is a great lens to use as you work through this novel (or any novel that represents a perspective that is unfamiliar to the reader). Ask yourself *What context do my students need to be able to find meaning?* This question will help to identify the necessity for any knowledge building activities as you move through the novel. Next, by being explicit with students about the purpose of building context – it creates a relationship between speaker (author) and listener (reader). Reciprocity or relationality is a significant aspect of the storyteller and listener relationship. Encouraging and being explicit with students about the responsibility of the listener role, to ultimately be able to identify moments where cultural context building is necessary, is a foundational aspect of Indigenous pedagogy.

Indigenous Language Exploration and Honouring:

David Robertson is Norway House Cree, and uses Cree throughout the text. The series itself is called *The Misewa Series*. Misewa in Cree means ‘*all that is.*’ Sharing this with students would be a great first step in engaging with Indigenous Language in this book. Explore and engage with Indigenous language by:

- Tracking Indigenous words and their meaning as a class on chart paper, as they are used in the text.
- Encouraging students to apply the language in oral language by speaking it, any written reflections by writing it, etc.
- Exploring Indigenous Languages on First Voices [website](#) (Including local Indigenous languages)
- Exploring and pronouncing Indigenous words from the text on First Voices [website](#)
- Have students share words from their language that are meaningful to them.

Connect to Local Language Teachings

The Langley School District Aboriginal program has a language teacher, Fern Gabriel, who teaches the hən̓q̓əmiñəm language to Langley students. To make local connections, engage in videos to hear and learn about the hən̓q̓əmiñəm language – please visit the SD35 website. Some of the videos that are generously shared, are already embedded within each section.

Access School District site: [Learn hən̓q̓əmiñəm](#)

Connection to Land:

FNESC includes the following framework for teachers to think about when connecting to land within Indigenous literature.

Connection with place, with the land, is foundational to Indigenous perspectives. Each Indigenous group holds unique worldviews, knowledge, and stories according to its environment and territories. The concept of Place goes far beyond the physical space. It includes a crucial Sense of Place – the memories, emotions, histories, and spiritualities that bind the people to the land. Five concepts of place have been identified, common to most First Peoples:

- Place is multidimensional. More than the geographical space, it also holds cultural, emotional, and spiritual spaces which cannot be divided into parts.
- Place is a relationship. Relationship encompasses both human relationships and the relationships between people and the land.
- Place is experiential. Experiences a person has on the land give it meaning.
- Place is local. While there are commonalities, each First Nation has a unique, local understanding of Place. Stories are connected to Place.
- Place is land-based. Land is interconnected and essential to all aspects of culture. Making connections with place in courses is an integral part of bringing Indigenous perspectives into the classroom. Peoples' perspectives are influenced by the land they are connected to. That means including experiential learning in local natural and cultural situations.

Adapted for EFP from Michell et al.,
Learning Indigenous Science from Place, p. 27-28

Say Something Strategy:

Let students know when you begin reading that you will be doing the *Say Something* activity at the end of the reading. This gives students a heads-up to be thinking while they are listening about what they will contribute. This is a great recursive strategy. Once the reading is completed– go around the classroom for everyone to 'Say Something'- the idea being that everyone's ideas are a contribution to our learning. Each person in the class goes and could contribute: a question, a part they liked, a connection to a past part of the book or other text, a prediction, etc. 'Say Something' can also be done as a Think-Pair- Share. Students may benefit from prompts on the board to support their ideas. Students are also encouraged to feed off one another, by acknowledging one another's ideas (*I want to add on to what Muhammed said...; I really like what Jasneet said, I hadn't thought about it that way because...*) The purpose is that everyone has something of value to contribute to move our collective understanding forward as we engage with story.

For more specific instructions use see: [Say Something Strategy](#).

Recursive Questions:

Asking the same or similar questions to begin discussion, in each section, supports the revisiting and building of understanding over time. It also allows students to acquire meaning, have epiphanies and connect to the process of learning based on their own contexts. This connects to the First Peoples Principles of patience and time as well as exploring one's own identity. Part of the learning process, over time, is the balance of both: *where we are finding meaning* and *where we do not understand*, is part of this process. Our job as teachers is to "[give] learners just enough to ensure understanding and to pique their curiosity to learn more". ([Indigenous Storywork](#), Dr. Jo-ann Archibald)

"Ellen uses a metaphor to symbolize time to think, talk and make meaning from a story. The blanket is a signal to the students that they are going to go 'within themselves' to think..."

They know that one day we're going to... look at it [the story]. We're going to lift all the little corners of it ... To bring in their interest [say]... we're going to talk about the story. We're going to lift this end, and lift it and peek under there to see what is going on in there.. how about the crying underneath there [in reference to a part of a story]" ([Indigenous Storywork](#), Dr. Jo-ann Archibald 135)

- Do you think this could be useful in our thoughts?
- Does it expand our thinking?
- What is meaningful to you? Where are you finding meaning? Where are you making meaning?
- What do you have questions about?
- What do you need to learn more about to better understand?
- How does this match what you/we already know?

(Questions taken from and adapted from [Indigenous Storywork](#), Dr. Jo-ann Archibald 136)

Teacher Resources:

Dr. Jo-ann Archibald| [On Indigenous Stories and their Framework](#)

- "... go away, reflect, figure out what I ought to do"
How is this story a guide?

Dr. Jo-ann Archibald| [On Including Indigenous stories](#)

- "... a basic form of protocol, teachers may actually use stories that Indigenous people from various communities have developed, teacher resources, published their own stories in book or video form. I think those are ones that teachers should feel comfortable using if they have been developed by Indigenous people. And in doing that, they can follow the protocol".

Basic Protocol: Identify storyteller. Identify Nation and culture the story derives from. Provide cultural context when necessary to support an understanding of the story.

Sketch-noting / Doodling / Word collecting:

When the teacher is reading aloud or the class is listening to the audio book, this is an effective strategy for helping students make sense of what they are hearing. Students record key words and images that resonate with them while they are listening to the text. This should be as a highly personal process, where students are encouraged to record words, phrases that connect with them,

and sketch images that resonate with them. It is key to remember that no one needs to be an artist to participate – this is a tool to help them create meaning from the text as they hear it. It is often valuable for students to reflect on which words or images they found themselves focusing on and what parts resonated with them personally.

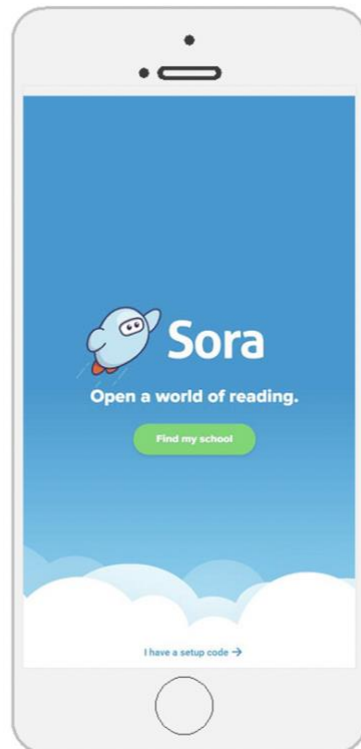
Listening:

The audio for this book is incredible. Whether through an Audible, purchased audio book or the district SORA app – engaging with this story through listening is a powerful strategy. This connects to oral tradition and the honouring of Indigenous languages. It is often said, that when listening – it's great to do something with your hands (Yolanda Skelton, LFAS). Suggestions of sketch-noting, colouring, weaving, creating while listening – all allow for the brain to listen, and stay focused. Listening can also support students thinking about not just *what* is said, but *how* it is said.

How do I sign in?

Access Sora from the app

Your school setup code is:
sd35ca



1. Tap to open the Sora app.
2. Enter your school setup code.
3. Enter your login credentials.
4. Browse, borrow, enjoy!

Download the Sora app



Character / Setting Charts:

As a whole class, keep track of key traits, events, ideas, or phrases that resonate with you around each of the main characters. Have students add to these as you read the book. These are whole class on large chart paper, to help all students see and access the information. This can be done first through small group discussion, where student identify key character and setting details that they believe should be added to the class charts. Keep these posted in your classroom and add to them as you read the book. It is powerful to also add stickie notes of evidence from the text that supports the traits you are.

Talking Circle Instructions:

“Talking Circles or Circle Talks are a foundational approach to First Nations pedagogy-in-action since they provide a model for an educational activity that encourages dialogue, respect, the co-creation of learning content, and social discourse. The nuance of subtle energy created from using this respectful approach to talking with others provides a sense of communion and interconnectedness that is not often present in the common methods of communicating in the classroom. When everyone has their turn to speak, when all voices are heard in a respectful and attentive way, the learning atmosphere becomes a rich source of information, identity, and interaction.”

For specific instructions, protocols and more please see the FNEESC recommended page: [Talking Circles](#)

Note for teachers For localized protocols and participation please reach out to the Aboriginal Support Worker in your school.

Medicine Wheel Thinking:

Indigenous worldview and knowledge are unique to each Nation. It is important to acknowledge these differences and unique traits and avoid generalizing across this diverse group of peoples. There are many diverse types and forms of Medicine Wheels. Yet an aspect that unites all these unique forms of the Medicine Wheel, is the significant role of balance modelled in the wheel and in our lives and the world around us. At different points in the novel have students engage with this Indigenous way of knowing and being.

Using a graphic organizer or having the four aspects written on the walls of your classroom – have students connect to thinking about:

the **Physical** (personal health, body, and/or land, place etc.),

the **Mental** (knowledge, learning, etc.),

the **Emotional** (the heart, relationships, family, feelings, etc.)

and the **Spiritual** (culture, tradition, language, spirit).

When using this tool – be sure to use it in a way that does not only highlight imbalance – but also balance. For example, it can be a strong tool to show when deficits exist (analyzing the plight of Misewa) – but it can also highlight when health and overall wellness exist (when the pack of four are out on their journey working together).

For more information on the Medicine Wheel teachings please go [here](#).

Note for teachers Cultural Presenters who teach about the Medicine Wheel can be booked [here](#). For more teachings with Dr. Martin Brokenleg, Circle of Courage, please go [here](#).

Twitter Board:

Allocate a section of your board space for this ongoing activity.

After each section read, each group of students (4-6 students) agree on one *Hashtag* that would best summarize the most important happening of the section read. The chosen Hashtags from each group are written on the board and read out to the whole class. Each student decides on which Hashtag they align most with and write a short response, a *Tweet*, on a sticky note to place under the *Hashtag*.

Before the reading of the next section of the novel, *Hashtags* and *Tweets* are read out and the board is cleared for the new *Hashtags* and *Tweets*.

This activity encourages discussion about what has been read and allows for engagement of all students as minimal writing is required. The reading out of the *Hashtags* and *Tweets* before each new section allows those who have missed that section or those who need to be reminded of what has happened, to hear a summary of what has happening in that section of the novel. This allows for the creation of community shared knowledge which fosters a group meaning making where every perspective counts.

Twitter / Image Board – School Wide:

Allocate a bulletin board in a common space. Have divisions contribute weekly a response. Do not post these until the end of the reading week to avoid spoilers. Students enjoy seeing the reactions of their peers. Couple this with a quick image or doodle that each class also contribute.

Note for teachers We caution against dividing it by division number. Instead do as grades or just a generic board that each class contributes to each week. A great location is outside the learning commons.

Wayfinding:

This is an ongoing activity that may be used for the duration of the novel, and beyond.

In the long-ago, before Google Maps or even street signs were available, Indigenous peoples found their way by their attentive and keen *noticing's* of the world around them.

For this activity you will find a walking route in the neighbourhood of your school. This route should be a distance that can be walked in 20-45 minutes, depending on your individual classes and the time you wish to allot for this activity. If possible, choose a route that includes cut-through pathways through cud-de-sacs or trails through wooded areas. Instruct your students that you will be walking a route that they will be creating a map for afterwards. Signage may not be included on the map, only landforms (i.e.trees, rocks), and landmarks (i.e.benches, fences, mailboxes etc.) will be used to mark places along the route. Invite your students to walk mindfully, noticing the forms around them.

Once returning to the school, have your students draw a map of the route using only the landforms/marks they remember. Walk the same route as many times per week as time allows. After each walk, students will continue to add details of their *noticings* to their maps.

A culminating activity may include trading maps with another student, or another class, to use as a guide for the route.

Follow-up discussion questions:

- What landforms/marks did you notice that you had not noticed on the first walk along the route?
- Did you and your partner have the same landforms and landmarks?
- In what ways was the map true to the route?
- What landforms did the novel characters, Ochek and Arik, use to wayfind their way through the Barren Grounds?
- How does using landforms/marks as wayfinding rather than using Google Maps, help us to better connect to the land around us?
- Create a mental map using landforms and landmarks of the routes to your hockey rink, friend's houses, the mall or other places you travel to.

Identity Weaving Art Project

Attached are instructions on how to engage students in an art project that explores different aspects of their identity. This activity is designed to accompany students throughout their novel study and beyond. By beginning with a shoe box, students weave their box covers and add a variety of meaningful images and objects throughout the novel. In a sense, students will be walking alongside the novel's characters as they share their own relationships with identity. Teachers are encouraged to adapt and build on this idea to best fit their classroom contexts.

Note for teachers This is also an excellent example of focusing on process- the process of weaving takes patience and time. We learn from our mistakes, and we help one another as we go, as everyone will be weaving at a different pace. This is also an opportunity to connect to place and Indigenous peoples. The west coast of BC has many Indigenous groups that are renowned weavers. Exploring with students the skill of local Indigenous weavers and artists highlights the knowledge and skill these communities hold.

A very special thank you for the instructions, created by art teacher April Parchoma from HDSMS.

Weaving Resources:

Note for teachers Cultural Presenters who teach Weaving can be booked [here](#).
Indigenous Weaving Lesson Plans- Comox Valley School District| [here](#)

Coast Salish Weaving: Tools and Technologies – Burke Museum| [here](#)

Exploring Patterns through Coast Salish Weaving- Lesson Plans & Math connections |[here](#)

The Fabric of our Land: Coast Salish Weaving- Museum of Anthropology| [here](#)

The Dogs that Grew Wool & the People who Loved Them- Hakai Magazine| [here](#)

Weaving Project

Shoe Box Covering Process



Purpose of exercise

Student can choose colours that remind them of family members, places they love, their cultural ancestry, places that remind them of home to weave a paper covering for their shoe boxes.

Things to keep in mind:

- This is a multi-class project
- Starting construction paper should be 24 x 35 with a bit extra needed for the lid
- The lid sits on top of the shoe box after the paper weaving is attached.

Teacher Preparation:

Supply check list:

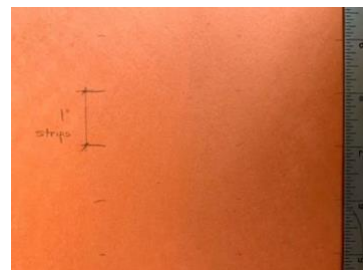
- 24 x 35 construction paper; 2+ sheets per shoe box.
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Stapler
- Masking Tape
- Eraser
- Paper cutter



The Prep Process

Prepping the paper

- Place two to three sheets of construction paper together and lightly staple along the top to secure the pages together for cutting.
- Take a ruler and mark out 23 notches for 1" spacing along the wide 35" side of the paper.
- Once you have enough marking guides for a clean cut either cut with scissors or with a paper cutter the strips until the last two inches of the 35" wide side.
- *NOTE: you will not be cutting strips all the way to the top. Leave the top 2" uncut.



Each student group will need:

- Scissors
- A stapler available
- Masking tape
- One base paper per student. One extra paper per student, and one extra paper per group (for 3-5 extra strips needed for the shoe box top).



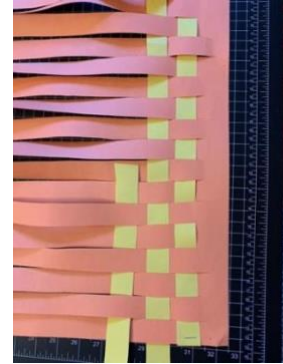
The Construction Process:

Getting Set Up

1. Have students choose their base colour to weave in and out of.
2. Have student choose the colours of their strips. The large papers have uncut tops so the students can trim them off as needed and the exercise is kept tidy and the paper strips have a higher chance of staying intact.
3. If students wish to have multiple colours they can share cut sheets with one another.
4. Make sure each weaving group/pair has:
 - a. Scissors
 - b. A stapler available
 - c. Masking tape
 - d. One base paper per student. One extra paper per student, and one extra paper per group (for 3-5 extra strips needed for the shoe box top).

Getting Started

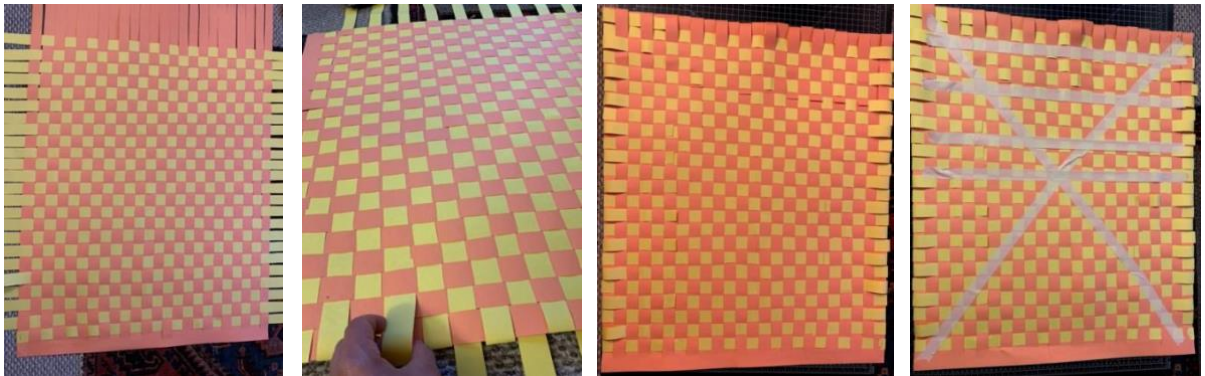
1. Weaving is an over and under action.
2. Every strip must be opposite the previous. So if one line is over, the next line is under on the same “warp” strip (the strips attached to the weaving base).
3. Stapling the first strip in can help get students started as it gives them some resistance to work with in their first row.
4. All remaining strips can be woven in leaving the ends equal on each side.



Now you can just keep weaving the paper over and under, adding 3-4 extra strips from another paper to the end to make sure you have enough paper to wrap the lid.

Weaving: Finishing Touches

1. Once you are finished loading all of the weaving strips into base sheet, you can then weave in the ends.
2. Every second end will weave into the top, so weave in all of the paper that bends and seals in the ends.
3. Once you have tucked all of them in, flip it all over and every second end will weave into the backside. Keep the weaving on its backside to tape with masking tape so that you can cut it to size for the shoe box and the lid.



Wrapping the box

1. Choose the side that will give you the most advantage. I found the 24” side wrap around the long side as well as left enough depth for the shorter sides of my shoe box. See photos for techniques used in the exemplar. If you have better wrapping techniques, please use them.
2. Use the remainder to wrap the lid.

