Lean-To Shelter

1 Push the two branches with the Y at the ends into the ground. It will be easier if you find a part of your lawn that is fairly soft. Make sure you get permission from your parents to build the lean-to in the yard.

2 Now take one of the longer branches and place it across the Y sections. Even though it might be a snug fit, use some of the heavy cord or kite string to tie the branch into place on each end.

3 Now take the remaining branches and lay them against the top branch at an angle. Carefully nudge the ends into the dirt. This will help keep the branches from falling down or blowing off in the wind. Note that the longer the branches are, the more room you will have in your lean-to shelter! Drape the blanket or towel over the branches.

**Supplies**

- 2 strong branches between 3 and 4 feet in length (about 1 meter), with a Y at one end of each
- 6 branches between 4 and 5 feet in length (1 to 1½ meters)
- heavy cord or kite string
- old blanket or large towel

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Most Union soldiers were issued shelter halves, which were, literally, half a shelter. Shelter halves were pieces of canvas cloth with buttons. Two halves of the shelter could be buttoned together to make a complete tent. Sometimes, three or four soldiers would button their shelter halves together to create a larger tent structure.

A-frame tents, also known as wedge tents, were also used during the first year or so of the Civil War. These were heavy and bulky and had to be carried by wagon. A-frame tents were discontinued early in the war, since they were just too impractical for field use.

Most of the fighting stopped during the winter months. Soldiers built log huts about 5 feet tall (2 meters), using their tents as roofs. They would build fireplaces on one end of the log hut, using sticks or bricks, with a barrel for a chimney.