

Lesson #2 - Clay Birds in Nest

Grade Level: 1-6



Description/Objective

Students learn to translate a two dimensional image from a photograph into a three dimensional clay figure. Clay shaping and construction techniques are reviewed.

Time

45 minutes - 1 hour

Materials

Photographs or illustrations of birds

Modeling clay that does not dry out and is not fired (Klean Klay is one brand name) 1 small stick per student

Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, pepper corns, etc. (sufficient selection to go around)

Feathers (3 per student)

Popsicle sticks (1 per student)

Toothpicks (1 per student)

Cardboard scraps approximately 4" x 4" - heavy enough

to hold the piece of clay decorated (one per student)

Selection of twigs, yarn, straw

White glue (one small container per 2-3 students)

Procedure

1. Display photos or illustrations of birds. Note that most birds, with the exception of long neck birds like the flamingo, are basically pear shaped (shape of head and body combined).
2. Have the students focus on similarities and differences in beak & wing shape, thickness of body, coloring of feathers and shape of tall feathers.
3. Ask students to choose a bird from the photograph that they find interesting and to take a mental picture of it. To do this ask students to look at it, and then close their eyes and try to imagine it. Allow time for them to visualize the birds.
4. Pass out a small handful of clay (1 stick of Klean clay) to each student.
5. Demonstrate how clay that has been rolled into a ball can be pinched three quarters of the way up to start to change it into a pear shape.
6. Students start by rolling and pinching the pear shape for the bird's head and body and then add pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds for the beak. Peppercorns can be used for eyes. Wings and tail feathers can be pinched out of clay or feathers can be used.
7. The popsicle stick and toothpick are used as clay tools to carve textures on the bird.
8. When the bird is complete, twigs, yarn, straw and other natural fibers can be glued to the scrap cardboard in the shape of a nest. The bird is then placed on the nest.

Subject Matter Integration

SCIENCE: This project integrates well with a unit on birds. Students can learn names of birds native to the area. Birds can be classified by habitat, those that are water dwelling, those that are desert dwelling and those that are forest dwelling.

LANGUAGE ARTS: Use the names of the birds for spelling words. Write a story about "a day in the life" of a bird.

MATH: Practice with the concepts of fractions and dimension/proportion of the bird's body.

Variations/Extensions

1. Using the same materials, but offering several colors of Klean clay, students can extend this project by making miniature duck decoys. Introduce the project by displaying real duck decoys

or photographs of decoys. Focus on the colors and patterns painted on the decoys. Students use the colored clays to create pattern and color detail.

2. Use potter's clay that can be fired for a permanent piece of artwork/gift.