

# Inventing a New Dinosaur

**Grade Level:** 2-6

## **Description/Objective**

Students learn basic building shapes of clay, how to join shapes and ways to create texture in clay, while creating a new dinosaur.

## **Time**

45 minutes - 1 hour

## **Materials**

Book with dinosaur illustrations (from the library)

12"x14" (approximate size) cardboard scraps covered with contact paper (1 per student). These can be reused for other clay projects.

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

Pumpkin seeds, pepper corns, elbow noodles (variety for student selection)

Tongue depressors (1 per student) and toothpicks (1 per student)

Selection of screws (to use for texturing and scoring clay)

## **Procedure**

1. Look at pictures of dinosaurs comparing their shapes, sizes and textures. Look for similarities that they have in common as well as differences that make them unique. Use words like sphere, cylinder and egg-shaped when talking about their body parts.
2. Ask students to imagine that scientists have discovered a new kind of dinosaur and to picture what it might look like. Allow time for students to visualize. Tell them they will be making it out of clay.
3. Demonstrate how clay can be shaped into spheres, cylinders and egg shapes by rolling it in your hands or on a flat surface. Show how those shapes can be modified by further pinching or rolling with more pressure. Demonstrate how to join shapes together to make them sturdier by scoring (scratching parallel lines across the shapes to be joined as they are placed in the joining position).
4. Pass out cardboard covered with contact paper for students to use as a base for modeling the clay.
5. Students are given a small handful of clay to create their dinosaur. Peppercorns, pumpkin seed and noodles can be used for details such as eyes and scales. The screws, toothpicks and tongue depressors can be used to create texture or pattern and to score clay.

NOTE: Potter's clay can be used for this project and fired in a kiln. If potter's clay is not to be fired in a kiln it should be painted with a mixture of 1/2 white glue and 1/2 water. The glue mixture can be put in paper cups and painted on with Q-tips. This should help prevent cracking of the clay.

## **Subject Matter Integration**

**SCIENCE/GEOGRAPHY:** Study and pinpoint on a map places in the western U.S. where dinosaur bones have been found.

**LANGUAGE ARTS:** Creative writing - students will choose a name for their dinosaur and write a fictitious account of where it lived, what it ate, who its enemies/predators were, etc.

**MATH/GEOMETRY:** Conservation of mass can be studied with younger children to show that the clay maintains its weight in different shapes. Volume can be calculated for the clay in different shapes with older children.

### Variations/Extensions

1. Read, but don't name, a description of an unusual bird or animal. Have students use clay to create that bird or animal as they pictured it from the description.
2. Have students draw/paint (with marker pens, water colors, etc.) their creation to distinguish between 3-D and 2-D.
3. See Clay Birds, lesson plan #2