

Evolutions of Pottery

OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will learn about the importance of clay and pottery throughout history. Students will utilize various interdisciplinary skills to learn about various aspects of historical pottery making. This information will in turn be put into application as students create their own clay artwork.

TIME ALLOTMENT

2-5 sessions of 45-60 minutes (depending on age, time constraints, and available materials)

SUBJECT MATTER

This lesson includes instructional goals in Art, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

- evaluate the impact of clay and pottery on prehistoric and modern civilizations
- categorize developmental stages of discovery, construction and usage on a timeline
- inventory the use of clay in a variety of techniques, uses and cultures

- document developmental contributions in the field of pottery
- integrate a variety of construction techniques in a personal clay artwork

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Linguistic, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist intelligences are all targeted in this lesson.

STANDARDS

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) (<http://www.state.tx.us/teks>)

Perception	.1A	.1B	
Creative Expression Performance		.2A	.2B
	.2C		
Historical/Cultural Heritage	.3A	.3B	.3C
Response/Evaluation	.4A	.4B	

MEDIA COMPONENTS

WEB SITES

2004 MASTER TEACHER

Pottery

Debbie Pruitt

www.textiles.com/features/pottery.htm

www.texasbeyonhistory.net

www.smith.edu/hsc/museum/ancient/invention/hselist.htm

www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/lessons/

<http://southwesternpottery.com/Facts.htm>

www.navajo_coop.org/traditional_pottery.htm

VIDEOS

Harding Black: An American Treasure, Alamo Public Telecommunications Council, 1999.

“Interests in One of a Kind Pots”
(03:40)

The clip begins with Black standing in front of his kiln discussing how pots can be one of a kind and continues with a discussion of Black’s early years and his initial interest in ancient pottery artifacts. This clip ends with a look at his early years at the Witte museum teaching pottery classes and digging his own clay at Elmendorf.

“*Learning from Mistakes*” (05:59)

This clip begins with Black taking pots out of his kiln and discussing obstacles which impact his finished product. He reminds us that mistakes can be good and that he views his work as only a starting point for new ideas. The idea that continued development is often

Evolution of

Grade 5-8

through a trial and error process is stressed throughout the clip.

MATERIALS

You will need the following to complete these activities:

PER CLASS

- Clay
- Water
- Samples
- Heavy canvas or cloth sheet for working surface
- Board, box or plate for storing individual pieces while drying
- A variety of tools for scraping, smoothing and decorating
- Paint for self-hardening clay or glaze for fired pieces (optional)

VOCABULARY

Artifact, ancient, shard, archaeologist, clay, pottery, hand wedging, pinch pot, coil, slab, carving, etching, incising, slip, resource, evolution, tiles, glaze, potter’s wheel, kiln

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY: SETTING THE STAGE

Brainstorm with students the meaning of “artifact.” Then, ask what archaeologists do. Explain to students that they are going to watch a video clip that describes Harding Black’s interest in ancient artifacts and its impact on his career choice. Provide a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION by having students listen for one reason why Black was interested in ancient artifacts.

PLAY the clip, "Interests in One of a Kind Pots," and discuss students' responses.

Next, ask students if they've ever made a mistake. Did they learn something from it? Discuss how we all learn from our mistakes, including craftsmen such as Black. Stress Black's use of trial and error in his work to improve construction and glazing as the students' FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION for the clip, "Learning from Mistakes." PLAY the clip and discuss students' responses.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. POTTERY TIMELINE

Relate Black's growth to the evolution of pottery discovery, techniques and usage during prehistoric times.

Show examples/samples of pottery artifacts and categorize items through visual and historical cues on a timeline. Be sure to include archaeological sites in Texas.

www.smith.edu/hsc/museum/ancient/invitation/hselist.htm

2. POTTERY COMPARISON

Compare and contrast construction and decorative methods of multicultural and traditional samples.

www.southwestern_pottery.com/Facts.htm

www.navajo_coop.org/traditional_pottery.htm

Discuss and make observations of contributions of a variety of artists and

cultures including Maria Martinez and Mata Ortiz pottery.

Brainstorm prehistoric and modern uses for clay other than vessels.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

POTTERS WORKSHOP

Demonstrate a variety of construction methods including pinch, coil, and slab. Allow students to practice and brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods. Encourage students to try incising and joining.

Students will design and build an original personal piece integrating 2 or more techniques.

If using self-hardening clay, allow to dry and then paint and seal. If using a kiln for firing, students may wish to experiment with glazing.

CROSS-CURRICULAR & EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE

- Discuss archaeologists' journals and brainstorm what information would be necessary to include when documenting a found artifact.
- Choose an artifact and imagine that you are an archaeologist. Write a page in your journal documenting and describing the item. Speculate on the events surrounding its use.

ARTS

- Use artifacts to set up a still life grouping and allow students to create a still life drawing.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

The Pot That Juan Built by Nancy Andrews-Goebel and David Diaz

The Single Shard by Linda Sue Park

The Children of Clay: A Family of Pueblo

Potters by Rina Swentzen and Bill Steen

Maria Martinez: Pueblo Potter by Per Anderson

The Living Tradition of Maria Martinez by Susan Peterson

The Legacy of Maria Poveka Martinez by Richard Spivey

RELATED ARTWORK/ARTISTS

Display a sample of artifacts, photographs, posters, books, and web sites from a wide range of time and cultures.