

Texas Treasures

OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will learn about clay manipulation as they examine alternate meanings of the word “treasure.”

TIME ALLOTMENT

2-3 sessions of 45-60 minutes

SUBJECT MATTER

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

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

- brainstorm the meaning of “treasure”
- identify a variety of natural resources available in the San Antonio area which impacted settlement patterns
- recognize clay as a natural resource used by a variety of cultures since prehistoric times
- identify characteristics of ancient clay artifacts and speculate on how the discovery of clay impacted early civilizations
- inventory possible uses for clay in early Texas missions

- manipulate clay to create a standing mission façade based on historical facts and Spanish construction requirements, incorporating historical examples as inspiration for carved designs
- peer and self evaluate finished products to justify choices in construction and decorative patterns

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

www.palodurocanyon.com

www.textiles.com/features/pottery.htm

www.texasbeyondhistory.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.

“An American Treasure” (03:57)
This clip introduces Harding Black in a wide range of colorful phrases, naming him as an American treasure, and ends with a glimpse at some of his beautiful pottery.

“Early Interests” (02:04)
You may also wish to view this clip which includes discussion of Black’s interest in the early history of pottery as he works on an archaeology dig in the Big Bend area of Texas. It ends with a review of his early years at Witte where he dug his own clay at Elmendorf for his pottery classes for children.

MATERIALS

You will need the following to complete these activities:

PER CLASS

- Clay
- Water
- Heavy canvas or cloth sheet for working surface
- Rolling pin or wooden dowel
- Board, box or plate for storing individual pieces while drying
- A variety of tools and found objects for scraping, smoothing and decorating (dull knife, fork, paper clip, dull pencil, toothpicks, etc)
- Large pieces of plastic cut from large garbage bags

VOCABULARY

Artifact, ancient, shard, archaeologist, clay, pottery, hand wedging, pinch pot, coil, slab, carving, slip, resource, mission, façade, adobe

PREP FOR TEACHERS

Review web sites and the following reading materials:

The Children’s Book of Pottery by Christine Row

Pottery Making (Crafts for Children) by Virginia Fowler

Pottery in Ancient Time (The Lerner Archaeology Series) by Richard L. Currier

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY: SETTING THE STAGE

Brainstorm meanings and examples of the word, "treasure." Ask, "Can people be a treasure, and if so, in what way?" After recording responses, tell students they are going to watch a short clip about a man who many have called "an American treasure." Provide a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION by asking students to listen for reasons why this person has received this description. PLAY the clip, "An American Treasure." Elicit responses from students.

Next, discuss clay as a natural resource and identify other natural resources important to early Texas civilizations. Brainstorm a list of natural resources needed to complete a mission compound such as San Jose Mission in San Antonio.

Provide a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION by having students listen for Black's interest in ancient artifacts. PLAY the clip, "Early Interests," and discuss students' responses.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

DAY 1

- A. Complete Introductory Activity.
- B. Look at samples of clay artifacts and speculate on usage. Be sure to show a variety of items such as jars, carvings, tools, sculptures, and broken shards.

- C. Discuss the multiple meanings of the word "mission." Allow each student to complete a pencil drawing of a mission façade, incorporating the following elements: 1-3 bell towers, at least 1 window, door, carvings to include at least 1 shell design. The final design will be the pattern for the façade in the next lesson. It is best not to exceed a 6"-8" rectangle. The final product has more stability if the rectangle is wider than tall.

DAY 2

- A. Demonstrate hand wedging. Pass out a ball of clay to each child and allow the students to hand wedge the clay to work out all the air bubbles. Allow the students to make observations about the clay as they manipulate it in a variety of ways. (Be sure the students know the difference between adobe and clay.)
- B. Roll out the clay to create a slab with a rolling pin or a wooden dowel. You may wish to use two strips of wood on either side of the clay to gauge the correct thickness and uniformity. The slab must be thick enough to ensure stability when standing during the drying stage.
- C. Using the pattern completed in day 1, trace around the outside edge of the pattern and cut out the shape from the slab with a dull knife.
- D. Allow the students to use their finger dipped in water or a smoothing tool to smooth the surface of the slab. Encourage the students not to

overwork the clay or allow the clay to become too dry. It may be necessary to smooth the surface and edges from time to time throughout the process with your finger dipped in water. *Caution: Do not over wet the clay.

- E. Use a toothpick or dull pencil to draw the features into the façade. Be careful not to carve too deeply or to flatten the clay too much during this process. Students will be tempted to cut holes for the bell in the tower. This may cause the façade to be less stable. Encourage the students to create a bell with impressing and joining. Wooden spoons make good tools for gentle impressing.
- F. The students may wish to add dimension to the façade by building up the design in some areas, such as around the window and door. Demonstrate the use of slip (clay and water mixture.) Tell the students this is like using clay glue. You need to make sure each added element is securely attached just as if you were gluing pieces of paper together. Use a toothpick or old fork to score the edges of both surfaces to be joined. Rub your finger with water along the scored surfaces or paint with slip. Join the two pieces and smooth the joints so that no cracks are showing.
- G. This is a good time to demonstrate coil and pinch techniques. Both can be used in building up the design.
- H. To create a stand for the façade, Roll 2 thick coils slightly longer than the

width of the façade. Join 1 to the front and smooth carefully. Stand up the façade and gently press down so the bottom of the coil flattens, creating a base for the facade. Add the coil on the back in the same way. Gently press down of the top of the coils to resemble a porch or entrance.

- I. As time permits, students may wish to create small items to go on the front of the porch. Be careful to join carefully. Small pieces of toothpicks can be used and hidden in the clay to help hold the items on the base.
- J. If a problem with stability is still an issue, toothpicks can also be hidden along the back of the façade. Be sure to cover the toothpicks well will clay.
- K. Store the missions in a safe dry place. Check on them often to make sure they are not drooping. It's best to store standing, but some students may need to lay theirs down so they dry flat. Propping over the edge of a book keeps the base from interfering with keeping the façade flat.

DAY 3

- A. When completely dry, students may wish to paint the facades and/or spray or paint with a clear sealer. If you have access to a kiln, fire before painting and sealing.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

MISSION WORKSHOP

Students will construct missions in the manner described above. Allow students to peer and self-evaluate their pieces. Use a rubric to justify correct construction and design techniques.

CROSS-CURRICULAR & EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Visit a mission in Texas with students. Have students write a journal entry recounting an imaginary experience from the perspective of a mission builder working to construct the mission.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

- When Clay Sings by Byrd Taylor
- The Pot That Juan Built by Nancy Andrews-Goebel and David Diaz
- The Single Shard by Linda Sue Park
- Children of the Clay: A Family of Pueblo Potters by Rina Swentzen and Bill Steen

RELATED ARTWORK/ARTISTS

Display samples of artifacts for students. Also show photographs, posters, books, and web-sites from a wide range of time and cultures depicting examples of clay artifacts. Photographs, drawings and artwork depicting missions of Texas are also useful.

