

Mini Wall Pockets

An early experiment with slab construction in making a functional clay piece. Students roll a slab and form it into a cone shape. Once the clay is dry, they can hang their pocket on the wall to hold objects, use it as a vase for dry flowers, or make a hanging ornament.

Air-dry or kiln-fire clay may be used. Finished pieces may be painted with acrylic color.

Grade Levels K-4

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Cover table with canvas, unprimed side up, to keep clay from sticking to the table. Tape the two rulers 10" apart on the canvas. Keep parallel.
2. Unwrap the block of clay. Mark approximately 1/4" guide dots on long side. Use nylon cutting tool to slice a small slab of clay for each student. Use and scrap or uneven piece to make slip. Slip is a small amount of clay size with two tablespoons water in a bowl or small jar. Use a finger to soften the clay. Slip is a glue for clay. Place a damp paper towel over the clay and place in a zip-lock plastic bag until ready to use.

Process

1. Place one cut slab between rulers. Use the rolling pin to flatten and even out the clay. Roll over the clay using the rulers as a thickness guide. Place the coffee filter over the clay and cut around the edge for the basic cone shape. Gently pull off the coffee



Materials

Amaco® Mexican® Self-Hardening Pottery Clay, (33205-3005) 5-lb block, cut to 10 pieces, need one piece per student

Student Clay Modeling Tools (30361-1009), 7-tool set, share three sets across classroom

Blick Plastic Ruler (55403-1012), need one per student

Wooden Rolling Pin, 10" (30345-1010), share one between four students

Nylon Clay Cutter (30357-0000), one to cut clay block

Fettling Knife (30349-1010), one to cut clay block

#2 coffee filter to use as a cone pattern, need one per student

Blick Matte Acrylic Colors 2-oz bottles (00727), assorted colors, share at least six bottles across classroom

Blick Economy Sable Round, 36-brush assortment (05147-0369), share set across classroom

Optional

Adhesive Magnets, 1/2" x 10-ft roll (61413-1016), cut to 1/2" squares

String, yarn or ribbon to use as a hanger

Process, continued

filter. Save the clay scraps to use for texture and designs on the front of the hanging cone.

2. Start with one side of the clay and gently wrap the clay closed tightly at the small bottom side and flared at the top. Using a clay tool with teeth, scratch the final over-lapping edge and the back piece it will attach to. Place slip on both scratched surfaces. Press the two surfaces together, press well. Support the cone with fingers inside the flared top. Any additional clay must be added at this time. Use the scratch and slip method to attach. Failure to use the slip correctly will make the clay surfaces separate as the piece dries.
3. Gently tap the back of the finished piece on the table surface to flatten the back. Use a pointed pencil or pen to poke two holes in the back. These will hold the string or wire hanger (two holes will balance). The flat back will also hold a magnet glued to it for refrigerators.
4. Store finished pieces in a safe, dry place for a couple days.
5. When dry, paint, add ribbon or string to hang.

Hints:

- [Unprimed Canvas \(07309-1363\)](#), makes a great table cover for working clay
- Air-dry clay will not hold water
- Place dried flowers, paper clips, etc inside the hanging cones
- Leave clay unpainted
- Vary sizes

National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

- **K-4** Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

- **K-4** Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art