

Donkey Beads & Bells (Art+ Music, Art+ Social Studies)

Donkey Beads are made by residents in rural areas of many Middle Eastern countries as good luck charms for their donkeys. These beads are also displayed in the windshields of trucks and cars in urban areas as a good luck talisman.

This lesson plan combines clay beadmaking with basic pinch and coil pot construction to make musical sounds. These sounds vary as the thickness and size of the pots and beads change. The clay procedures in this lesson plan are building blocks for progressing into the upper grades. Air-dry or kiln-fired clay may be used.

Grade Levels K-12

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

Preparation

1. Suggested resource book: [Ceramics Class Hand-Building Techniques](#) (70156-1004)

Process

1. Cover tables with plastic for easy clean up and good clay working surface. Start the pinch pot with a ball of clay that fits comfortably in the palm of the hand. Hold the clay in one hand and press the thumb of the other into the ball, turning until a deep hole forms. The sides of the pinch pot can vary but keep a little over 1/4" thickness. The thickness varies and larger pots need a little thicker support. While damp, use the Kemper cutting tool to make a hole in the bottom of the pot. The shape can stay plain or



Materials

[Dynasty White Bristle Brushes](#), set of 72 (05187-2009), 1 cannister per class

[Student Clay Modeling Tool Set](#) 7-tool set (30361-1009), share three sets across classroom

[Amaco® Marblex Self Hardening Clay](#), 25-lb box, (33204-2525) divide two boxes of clay into 15 sections, need one per student

[Kemper Hole Cutter](#), (30369-4014) 1/4" dia., share two across classroom

[Macramé Ring](#), 6" dia. (66909-9006), need one per student

[Premium Leather Remnants](#) (61706-1001) three 1-lb bags per class

[Snippy Scissors](#) pointed (57040-2005), one per student

[Shiva® Student Grade Paintstik® Oil Colors](#), 12-color set (00402-1009), share one set across classroom

[Shiva® Artist's Paintstik® Oil Colors](#), Iridescent 6-color set (00405-1019) share one set across classroom

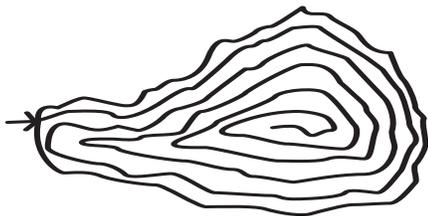
[Shiva® Artist's Paintstik® Oil Colors](#) White (00409-1014) three per class; Yellow Ochre (00409-4044) two per class; Purple Sage (00409-6414) three per class; Light Green (00409-7014) two per class

**Note - Shiva® Artist's Paintstik® Oil Colors are a paint without damar varnish and only a drop of linseed oil. They are non toxic and clean up with soap and water. The paint contains pigment and a drying agent. Paintstiks are in stick form and of lipstick consistency. The dryer helps the paint to dry in about 24 hours. It also helps adhere to many surfaces including ceramics, paper, cloth, metal and plastic. Humid areas will take longer to dry. The paint is very intense and a little goes a long way, cut each stick in half to share. The paint will have a dry skin on it to protect the paint. This skin is as thin as a membrane on an egg. Remove the skin using a knife tip to gently open, then peel off. After use do not remove excess paint. Drop the uncleaned sticks into a gallon zip lock bag. To use again, remove the old paint with a knife. This process saves paint.*

Process, continued

designs can be cut into the edges or sides of the pot. Add texture with the modeling tools at this time.

2. Coil pots are a little more involved. Divide clay into three balls about the size of a golf ball or bigger. Have a small bowl of water handy. Pull the round ball to make an elongated shape. Place on the table. Use a palm of a hand to press and roll the clay into snake-like shapes of any length. Dip a pointed tool or a plastic fork tip into the water. Scratch or score the length of the clay end to end. Dip fingers in the water and add a little moisture to the textured area. This creates slip or clay "glue." To make the bowl, start with one end of the coil and curl it together. Move the coil on top of the base clay. Firmly press as clay is added to secure the coils to each other. Continue to add more coils until the height is bowl like. Smooth the coils on the inside of the bowl to join and blend the coils. The coils on the outside are great texture as they appear. Texture these more if needed. Use the Kemper hole tool to put a hole in the bottom of damp bowl.
3. Make small round balls of clay, large enough to put a hole through them with the Kemper tool. This tool produces holes of a consistent size that are large enough to accommodate the leather hanging strip.
4. After the clay dries for at least 24 hours, paint with Shiva Paintstik using a stiff brush to cover the clay. Let dry overnight. Set all bowl bells and beads aside.



5. Cut a small piece of leather into long strips of varying lengths, approximately 1/4" wide (see above).
6. Thread the leather through the top bell. Leave about 8" of string on top of the bell for attaching to the macramé ring. Knot the string directly under the hole in the bell to keep it in place. Hang one bead

toward the bottom of the lip of the bell so it will strike the bell and make a ringing sound. Add more bells and beads as desired and more pieces of leather to lengthen.

7. Tie the top of the leather on to the hoop and wrap some leather between each bell strand. Add a little glue to the place where the strand of bells hangs on the hoop.

Hints

- Consider weight of the strands if more than one is hung on a hoop.
- Due to the weight of the bells, yarn should not be substituted for leather strips

Options

- Bells and Beads may be painted with tempera or acrylic.
- Upper grades could use wheel-thrown clay bowls.
- Hang one strand by each child on the same pole as a screen.

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National Standards

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

K-4 Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and idea

9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

K-4 Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures

5-8 Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts

9-12 Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places