

Molded Clay Faces

(art + social studies)

The expressive qualities of clay are perfect for creating many different types of face masks, from Mardi Gras glitter to Japanese Kabuki to African ceremonial masks. Using a pre-formed mold may seem to limit the creativity, but every face comes out a little bit different - just like ours! Decorations such as gems, feathers and glitter can be embedded directly in the clay and, once dry, it can be painted or finished in many exceptional ways.

There are 2 processes, one for very young children and one for older children who are capable of rolling slabs

Grade Levels K-8

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

Preparation

1. Unwrap the block of clay. Mark approximately 1/4" guide dots on top (smaller side). Use nylon cutting tool to slice a small slab of clay, cut that slice into fourths. Set aside. Keep a damp cloth over the clay until it's ready to be used
2. Coat the outside of the face form with petroleum jelly for easy release

Process K-3

1. Coat the inside of the Face Form with petroleum jelly to release. Place glitter, feathers or gems inside the mask first, before adding clay.
2. Take small (quarter size) pieces of clay off the block and press down into the face mold from the back. Look through the transparent face to make sure that clay is pressed down into nose, mouth and eyes. Overlap clay pieces until face is covered. Fill face to the top of the mold, but do not overlap edges. Mask should be about 1/4" thick in all areas. Optional: use the Modeling tools to scrape away holes for eyes, nose and mouth.
3. Allow to dry for several hours or overnight - long enough for clay to harden but not dry. Remove face from the mold and allow to dry for another day or so. Petroleum jelly may make the clay seem to be moist still, even when it's dry!



Materials

Amaco® Mexican Pottery Clay (33205-3005)
OR Amaco® Stonex White Clay (33247-1005),
need one 5-lb box per 10 students

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

Roylco® Multicultural Face Forms (61131-1010),
pkg of 10, need one per student

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

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

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

Petroleum Jelly

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

Process, continued

4. Paint and decorate as desired. Paint the back of the face with at least 2 coats of any color of Blick Craft Paint to add strength.

Process 4-8

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. Drape the slab of clay over the Face Form, gently pressing to form around the mouth, nose and eyes. Continue to press around sides of face, forehead and chin until face is formed on mold. You may trim off excess clay or leave it as part of the design around the face. Optional: use the Modeling tools to create holes for eyes, nose and mouth.
2. At this point, you may embed glitter, feathers, gems or other decorations in wet clay, sculpt textures and patterns if desired.
3. Allow to dry for several hours or overnight - long enough for clay to harden but not dry. Remove face from the mold and allow to dry for another day or so. Petroleum jelly may make the clay seem to be moist still, even when it's dry!
4. Paint and decorate as desired. Paint the back of the face with at least 2 coats of any color of Blick Craft Paint to add strength.

Options

- Pierce a hanging hole with the Modeling Tools or a pencil, string with raffia, hemp or cord.
- Self-hardening clay, like any clay, is not extremely durable. Handle masks with care.
- Unpainted masks may be coated with Blickrylic Clear Polymer Gloss medium (00711-1027) to seal and add strength

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 ideas

Content Standard #3 — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas

K-4 Students select and use subject matter, symbols and ideas to communicate meaning

5-8 Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks

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 know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures