

Wee Puppets

(art + literature)

Exercising the imagination helps children develop problem-solving skills. This lesson incorporates students' artistic skills to sculpt finger puppets out of clay and to use their imaginations to make up a story for their characters. The stories do not have to be written but can be told freely. Create a theatre in the classroom — a table with a cloth over it makes a great stage for Wee Puppets. This project is a wonderful interactive classroom event.

Grade Levels K-6

Note: instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Students think of a story. The story can be from a real event they experienced, one they completely invented from their imaginations, or a blend of the two. The stories can also be designed around the characters they create.

Process

1. Students begin with an approximately 1-1/4" ball of Cloud Clay or Model Magic as their base for each finger puppet. Students should consider how many characters are necessary to make their stories come alive.
2. To make a puppet, students push their finger into the clay and form the clay around it. The puppets should be sit snugly on the finger. If the puppet is too loose, it will fall off.
3. Create details with additional clay using a variety of colors. Colors can be mixed to create additional colors. Make sure the students think about their stories to determine any accessories the characters may need. The clay should stick to itself. After 30 minutes the clay may begin to dry and the pieces may no longer stick together firmly. Use glue to reattach the pieces as necessary. Use an extruding tool to help create fine details.
4. Let the puppets dry completely. The finished pieces will be lightweight, with the consistency of a firm foam ball.
5. Paint a thin coat of Blickrylic Gloss Medium over the dry finger puppets to protect them from dirt. The coating will also help the puppet pieces stick together.



Materials

Amaco® Cloud Clay™, 4-oz, assorted (33285-); share 20 packs across class

Crayola® Model Magic®, Black, 4-oz (33214-2004); share three packs across class

Crayola® Model Magic®, White, 4-oz (33214-1044); share three packs across class

Blickrylic® Polymer Gloss Medium, quart (00711-1027); share one across class

Kid's Clay/Dough Extruders, set of 12 (34000-1012); share across class

Crayola® Premium Taklon Watercolor Brush, Size 7 (05138-1007); share 12 across class

Student Clay Modeling Tool Set, set of 7 (30361-1009); share two across class

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

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.