

Stage 3 (Years 5 and 6) Creative Arts

Step 1



Prepare 3 equal sized balls of clay - approx 200-250 g each ball. Make sure that there are no air bubbles hidden inside the clay by kneading it firmly.

Step 2



Make 3 pinch pots - Start by sinking your thumb into the centre of the ball and using your fingers to gently press the clay to form the sides of the pinch pot. Rotate the ball in your hand and continue with this gentle squeezing and rotating until a bowl is formed. To keep the rim edge of the pot even, turn the pot upside down and gently tap it on the table to make it a flat edge. Of the three bowls, two need to be of roughly the same size and one slightly bigger. The bigger one will be used to make the shoulders.

Step 3



Crumple newspaper and fill all three snugly. The newspaper gives support during the making, but will burn up in the firing.

Step 4



Head - Score the edges of the two smaller pinch pots with a fork or toothbrush. Scoring means making a rough surface where there is to be a join, so that the two surfaces connect firmly.

Step 5



Join the two pinch pots together, keeping a section of the join open for the mouth space and gently jiggle the edges together.

Step 6



Smooth the surface of the join gently, pulling clay down from one side of the join to the other to hide the line.

IMPORTANT NOTE: There must be an open section of the mouth to let the air escape from the head during firing. If the air cannot escape it will expand as it heats and more than likely blow up during firing.

Step 7



Neck - Carefully squeeze down some of the clay from the underside of the head and gently work it to form a neck.

Step 8



Eyes - Sink the eye sockets by gently pressing with two fingers. Always support the structure with your other hand while adding features.

Step 9



Use the extra clay for the next steps:

Make 2 small balls of clay for the eyeballs. Test out the size before attaching by gently placing them in the socket. You need to keep some space around the eyeballs to attach eyelids in the next step.

Step 10



Nose - Make a small triangular shape for the nose and score, attach and smooth it into place

Step 11



Eyelids - Make small curved shapes for the eyelids and smooth into the topside of each eye socket.

Step 12



Press the end of a round barrelled pencil into the eyeball to create the iris of the eye and the point of the pencil to add the pupil.

Step 13



Eyebrows, moustache, beard etc.

Shape eyebrows and moustache from small amounts of clay and attach by scoring with a clay tool and working the clay onto the surface. Add roughish lines for hair texture using a clay tool.

Make sure you don't capture any air bubbles between the two surfaces by jiggling the new features into place gently. Smooth out any unwanted lumps and bumps.

Step 14



Ears - Shape a half circle of clay and connect to the side of the head.

Repeat for the other side - score the joining surfaces and smooth the join.

Step 15



Shoulders - Join the head to the remaining, slightly larger pinch pot, which becomes the shoulders and remember to score both surfaces with a clay tool before joining.

Step 16



Remember to avoid trapping any air inside the join and firmly twist the two surfaces together to get a strong connection.

Smooth the join to work the clay together, adding a very small amount of moisture if the clay has dried out during the making process.

If too much water is added, the clay becomes slimy and the join will not be as strong.

Step 17



Use your finger to smooth out the join between head and shoulders and position the head tilt to the desired level at this point also. Take a little time to do this well, as a strong neck joint is important to the longevity of the sculpture. Remember to support the rest of the structure while smoothing the join.

You can add lots more character to your new creation with other features like hair, beard and sideburns, etc. Shape small pieces and add details of line with a clay tool or pencil to give texture to hair, eyebrows and moustache.

Step 18



Finishing off your clay sculpture

Add other details such as hair and clothing or accessories like a battered hat or pipe!

Look at the sculpture from all angles – is it looking the way that you want it to look?

Spend some time observing and refining each area - add texture with lines on the face to show weathering if your bust is of a gold miner who has been at the goldfields for a long while!

Finishing touches



Finish off with some flattened pieces on the shoulders to make a shirt and add a button and button hole.

The finer details: Take time to carefully add more details to your head using a fine sharp pointed implement. Smooth the clay and work it until it looks how you want it to look. Make sure that there are no trapped air bubbles anywhere before you have the bust fired, this includes leaving a space open at the mouth or it may well explode during the process. The artwork should be completely dry before taking it to be fired.

Drying: Very important -allow your sculpture to dry completely. It will take about 4-5 days in summer and at least a week in the cooler months. When it is dry it can be bisque fired - this is the first firing and it will leave the surface quite textured.

Further firing suggestions: Locate a ceramic studio nearby that can fire the finished clay artworks made by your students after completing the activity. Search 'ceramic firing' and ask for a costing on bisque firing for the whole group. Your sculpture can be left as bisque after one firing OR clear glaze can be applied at this stage and then fired again to give a shiny finish.

If you want to have coloured sculptures, then underglazes can be applied after the first firing, but this can be a difficult process for beginners. Alternatively, after the first firing (bisque), other glazes can be applied if desired, and then fired again, depending on your level of expertise with the glazing process.