

2nd Grade - Owls

(two-part lesson)

Part I

Lesson Objectives

Students will solidify their skills using hand building and the clay rolling method to roll out a clay slab. They will learn how to apply interesting textures to the clay, and how to attach pieces of clay together.

Vocabulary

- *Pottery*: Vessels like bowls, jugs and other objects made from clay.
- *Hand building*: Using hands, fingers and simple tools to shape clay.
- *Clay Slab*: Clay that has been rolled out flat.
- *Greenware or Boneware*: Unfired clay projects.
- *Bone Dry*: Completely air-dried clay.
- *Bisqueware*: Clay projects that have been fired once, without glaze.
- *Kiln*: An oven used for firing clay.
- *Fire*: To heat clay in a kiln.
- *Glaze*: Paint used to color clay; glaze turns to glass when fired in a kiln.

Project Supplies – 1st class

All supplies should be in the supply room on the clay shelves.

- Canvas table cloths (for white clay; one for each table)
- Wire cutter (to cut the clay block)
- White clay – ½” slice from a clay block per student (or a baseball-sized ball of clay)
- Bamboo skewers (one per student)
- Rolling pins (one per student)
- Clay rulers (2 per student)
- Dinner-sized paper plates (one per student)
- Circular items to create imprints (ex: bottle and marker caps)
- Water cups (add to tables when needed)



Lesson Summary:

- Step 1: Roll out a slab.*
- Step 2: Cut out a circle.*
- Step 2: Add feather texture to lower half.*
- Step 3: Create wings.*
- Step 4: Create head, ears and cheeks.*
- Step 5: Make the eyes.*
- Step 6: Add a beak.*
- Step 7: Add detail to wings.*
- Step 8: Make a hole for hanging the owl.*

Instructions – 1st class

Play the step-by-step lesson video below during your class to assist you with the steps.

[Step-by-step lesson video](#)

(This video is also available to access via the Art Docent page on the PTSA site)

1. Hand out the clay slices (or balls of clay). Instruct students to place rulers either side of the clay and roll out the clay until it is the thickness of the rulers. Instruct students to roll one direction, then pick up the clay and turn it around, then roll again to make the clay slab bigger. With a ball, it will be help if they pat it down a bit first so it is flatter and easier to roll out.

Rolling multiple ways is important because it will help avoid cracks as the clay dries. It is also important to roll the clay down to the thickness of the rulers and not below this height. Thin clay will dry out too fast and cause cracks.

2. Hand out dinner-sized paper plates and instruct students to use their bamboo skewer to cut out a circle using the plate as a template.
3. Using a little water, have students dip their finger into a water container and smooth out the rough edges on the circle. If little crumbs are left they may become sharp after bisque firing.
4. Have students use a circular item (like a bottle cap) to create feather detail on the lower half of the circle.
5. Instruct students to fold over both sides of their circle to create wings. They should squish each wing down into place a little.
6. Have students fold over the top of the circle to form the head.
7. Instruct students to gently pinch out the upper and lower corners of the owl's face to create ear and cheek tufts.
8. Using a skewer or a circular item (like a bottle cap), instruct students to create imprints to form the eyes.
9. From the leftover clay, instruct students to cut out a triangular beak.
10. Instruct students to scratch (score) the back of the beak and where they are going to place it using a skewer, then add a little water to the back of the beak and where they are going to place it (slip). Then they can stick the beak into place (press).
11. Students can add detail onto the wings (like lines that follow the edge of the wings) using the skewer.
12. Instruct students to poke a hole above the eyes in the center of the owl, all the way through so it can be hung later (make sure the hole isn't too close to the edge).
13. Instruct students to gently brush off any clay crumbs.
14. Students should use a bamboo skewer to clearly write their FIRST name and LAST initial on the back of their owl.
15. Have students place their owls into a class cardboard box that you have labelled using a clay log sheet. They will dry out on the kiln shelves for about 3 weeks before being fired in the kiln.

Clean-up Instructions

1. **Make sure to securely tie leftover clay.** To avoid hardening of the clay, ensure to tie the clay blocks or any leftover clay properly. Remove as much air as possible from the bag first.
2. **Remove cloth tablecloths** - Carefully remove excess clay bits from the cloth canvas table cloths and put this in the trash, then fold the cloth canvas tablecloths in on themselves to avoid letting clay dust into the air or on the floor. Store them back in the correct plastic tub just inside the supply room (red clay tub or white clay tub).
3. **Wipe off the table with a wet rag** - if you cannot find a rag please ask the janitor.
4. **Do not allow students to wash their hands in the sink directly**- Keep a bucket of water near the sink and have each child wash in the bucket first and then in the sink. If the clay settles at the bottom of the sink, it will clog the drain.
5. **Clean all the tools used in the bucket**- Make sure to clean all the tools used for the project in the bucket first and then in the sink.
6. **Leave the bucket of clay water overnight to settle** - After the clay settles in the bucket, discard the water carefully in the sink without disturbing the settled clay at the bottom of the bucket. This clay can be either used as a slip or be discarded in the trash. This does not have to happen the next day, but should be done ASAP.
7. *****DON'T FORGET TO LOCK UP THE KILN CAGE AND RETURN THE KEY TO THE FRONT OFFICE!!*****

TIPS

Docents are welcome to practice the project prior to teaching. Save your creation in case there are any absent children the day of the project.

Students can use the *Score, Slip, Press, Compress* technique to join two pieces of clay together. Score the two clay pieces using a skewer or other sharp tool. Add slip to both clay pieces (water, or a pre-made clay/water mixture), press the pieces together, then use a finger or a tool to compress along the seams or edges of the clay.

If the owl begins to crack or become brittle, the clay has been overworked. Molding should stop at the first sign of cracking. Use a little spray of water to moisten overworked clay in order to smooth it out.

Avoid small, thin shapes when creating the beak. Attachments should be no smaller than a nickel.

Students will have a follow-up class to glaze their project at least one month after this class is completed. Ensure this class is scheduled with your teacher and ensure that your teacher has booked the STEAM lab in advance.

Clay log sheets to attach to class cardboard boxes can be found in the front of the blue Clay Lesson Plans folder on the clay shelves in the supply room.

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Part II

Once the owls have been fired in the kiln, they are ready to be glazed.

Glaze Supplies – 2nd class

- Paper towels
- Fired projects
- Glaze colors (one for each table, e.g. brown, orange, light blue, yellow, white)
- Cups or trays for glaze
- BLUE glaze brushes
- Samples of glazed projects (in the supply room)

Instructions – 2nd class

1. Set out paper towels, blue glaze brushes and two cups of ONE color per table. Start with about ¼” of glaze per cup. If you can find some scraps of paper in the supply room, a similar color to how the glaze will look after being fired, place those scraps of paper on the tables so that students understand which color is at each table.
2. Show examples of glazed owls if possible and/or show some online photos. Samples may be found in the supply room.
3. Instruct students to place their owl on a paper towel and to not lift it from the towel when glazing.
4. Instruct students that there is one color at each table, and that there are dedicated brushes for each glaze color. **THEY SHOULD NOT MIX GLAZES.** Explain that this is so that any leftover glaze can be reused instead of thrown away. **BRUSHES SHOULD NOT GO FROM TABLE TO TABLE.**
5. Instruct students that they should walk to a different table, holding their owl on a paper towel, if they want to apply a different color.
6. Let students know that if they want a deeper/brighter color, they need to apply multiple layers of the same color. They should let each application dry before applying another layer. Three thin layers of a glaze color is better than one thick layer.
7. Once a glaze color is dry, other colors can be layered on top. Remember that dark colors will prevail. Use black color sparingly.
8. Explain to students that they should not glaze the bottom or ¼” from the bottom of their clay owl, because the glaze may stick the project to the kiln shelves when it is fired.
9. Have students leave their owls at their places. Art docents should follow important clean-up steps below.

Clean-up Instructions

1. Check the bottom of each owl for glaze. If found, carefully wipe it off with a damp, warm sponge.
2. Place owls into cardboard boxes (throw away paper towel). Do not stack glazed owls on top of each other.
3. Fill out a log sheet and attach it to the cardboard box containing the owls. You may need more than one log sheet if there are multiple boxes. Log sheets can be found in the blue Clay Lesson Plans folder on the clay shelves in the supply room.
4. Place the cardboard box(es) onto the kiln shelves in the kiln cage. Owls will be fired by the kiln team in 3-5 days once they are dry. They will be available for pickup in the supply room after being fired.
5. Return any unused glaze to the correct jar.
6. When replacing the lid on a glaze jar, make sure the rim is clean; wipe it with a damp paper towel or sponge. Otherwise the jar may glue shut. If you come across a stuck jar, run the lid under hot water to loosen it.
7. *****DON'T FORGET TO LOCK UP THE KILN CAGE AND RETURN THE KEY TO THE FRONT OFFICE!!*****