

# Southwestern Pottery

## Summary

This lesson introduces students in a ceramics class to the traditional art of the Southwest from pre-historic time to the present day. This lesson plan also helps students explore their own cultural background through art and aesthetics.

## Time Frame

9 class periods of 70 minutes each

## Life Skills

Aesthetics, Communication, Social & Civic Responsibility

## Materials

### Supplies

Images of pre-historic rock art and artifacts (websites and books are provided as resources in this plan).

Pottery, shards, and tools.

### Clay

White, red, yellow, and dark brown

Spoons for burnishing

Paddles

### Books

- Southwest Pottery: Anasazi to Zuni  
by Allan Hayes
- When Clay Sings  
by Byrd Baylor and Tom Bahti
- The Story of Casas Grandes Pottery  
by Rick Cahill
- Sacred Images: A Vision of Native American Rock Art  
by Leslie Kelen and David Sucec

## Background for Teachers

Teachers should be familiar with the pinch pot and coil techniques as well as with the designs of Native Southwest people. Teachers should have an understanding of the history of Southwest art design and the meanings associated with the art work.

## Student Prior Knowledge

Students should have a basic foundation for ceramic work, drawing and ceramic design.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

Students participating in this lesson will learn and practice the hand building techniques of pinch pot, coil and burnishing.

Students will learn about clay bodies, slips and applying them.

Students will learn to draw, copy and design visual patterns on the clay body using clay slips for painting.

Student will make a pot in the form of a traditional Southwest style.

## Instructional Procedures

### Lesson Rationale

In Missing Stories the preface to the chapter on the Ute Community suggests that the Utes are a "lost culture" a "lost community" and that public education has been set up to "produce white people." Many of the traditions of the Ute culture has been assimilated into Utah culture. Understanding the differences and the contributions of Ute culture to Utah culture is important for students to understand. At the same time, in this lesson students are encouraged to explore the art of their own culture and to better appreciate the contributions their ancestors have made to Utah culture.

### Day One

Show students pictures of various types of rock art and pottery (taken from the books/websites provided). Discuss with students the various cultures and traditions of the peoples that inhabited the Southwest before Western European peoples arrived. Follow this review with a discussion of the importance of petroglyphs and pictographs to Native American peoples.

Demonstrate for students the pinch pot and coil techniques. Review with the students each of these techniques through pictures, websites, and/or slides (some resources are attached to this lesson plan).

Students should begin drawing two different pot shapes and incorporating at least 25% of the body with drawings of traditional designs, images, and patterns. Students should draw from the resources provided in class, as well as their own research of pinch pot and coil pot design (either in class if resources are available, or at home).

### Day Two

Students should continue to work on their drawings and designs.

As a class watch the Maria Martinez videos (attachments). Discuss the different tribal groups of the area and their district styles. Discuss how pottery and design are used as a "storytelling tool." Discuss with the class what it means to tell a story through art. (Martinez videos can be purchased on Amazon.com. Many school libraries will also carry the videos). Students could also view these videos at home (see websites for resources).

### Day Three

Review their individual designs with students. Students should be keeping sketches in their portfolios. Students are required to put some of their own research of images and information in their portfolio along with the information from the Internet, books, magazines, etc., that they have collected for this project.

### Day Four

Students will begin to work on creating their pot. Start with pinch pot technique:

- Use pattle to smooth the outside of the pot.

- Smooth the inside of the pot with fingers and sponge.

- Cut off uneven top with needle tool.

- smooth and add on coils to the pot to finish it.

- Smooth out both sides, even lip and dry to leather hard.

### Day Five

Continue work from Day Four. Once students have completed the work on the pot they should burnish the pot until the outside surface is shiny.

### Day Six

Draw design on pot with a pencil using the small wheels to get even lines going around the pot. Students should use the designs they have researched and drawn in their sketch books. These drawings should be based upon traditional designs (Native American or their own culture).

### Day Seven

Paint designs carefully with small brushes using different color slips of clay (red, yellow, brown). These are the traditional colors of native pot design. Remind students to sign their work (bottom of

pot).

### Day Eight

After the pieces are fired talk about each student's work in a class critique session. Assign students to collect information about their own cultural history and the art of their culture. They will be required to talk about their culture and its art in the next class period. They should each bring in at least one picture to discuss (image from a book, Internet, family picture, etc.).

### Day Nine

Have the students share their own culture's art in a class discussion. Have each student describe the image they brought to class and the meaning the object/item has in their culture. Encourage the students to make a connection between the cultural object they bring to class (the meaning associated) with what they have learned about Native artwork.

The finished products from the class should be displayed in a school or art department or library display case (if space is available). Also included in this exhibit should be informational text about each piece (written by the student artist) and sample student drawings of their individual designs.

### Extensions

The section of this lesson plan that requires students to research their own cultural heritage could be expanded to extend throughout the course of the lesson (and not just in the last two class periods). Each day students could be required to do research and create a portfolio of information to be submitted at the end of the lesson. Students could collect various images (over a historical time period, or geographical period, etc) and information about each image/object that would be presented in the portfolio.

Students could also be assigned to journal about their experience and their findings (research on Native as well as the designs of their individual heritage).

### Bibliography

Kelen, L.G, & Stone, E.H. (2000). Missing Stories: An Oral History of Ethnic Minority Groups in Utah. Utah State University Press. Logan, UT. 2000-2001

Classic Maria Martinez (video). National Park Service Film. January 1999. DVD

### Authors

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