

# FIFTH GRADE CLAY - "MARACAS"



## Art Element:

Form, Texture

## Tools:

Clay Samples  
Art Term Posters

## Supplemental Tools/Ideas:

Music – use the boom box in the portable  
Books – check the Art Docent library, books from home, etc.  
World Map – show where pottery forms have been created

## Supplies:

### Form Lesson:

Clay  
Texture Tools  
Canvas Desk Covers  
Paper Towel  
Plastic Portion Cups (to use for Slip)  
Rollers  
Dowel (used to measure thickness)  
Clay Cutters

### Glaze Lesson:

Finished sculptures  
Glaze  
Glaze Brushes  
Plastic Portion Cups

## **Introduction:**

\* Pass out a small chunk of clay to each student to play with while you are talking. This will allow them to answer your questions and take the mystery out of playing with it! Explain that they can manipulate this chunk however they want, but must be careful with the actual piece they get for their sculpture. ☺

1. Today we are learning about an ancient art form – pottery! The use of clay to create pottery has been used for a very long time; ancient pottery has been discovered from nearly 30, 000 years ago! Can anyone tell me where clay comes from? Yes, it is a natural substance on earth, it is a very fine-grained natural soil – sort of like mud. Some of you may even be able to dig some up in your backyards!

2. Can anyone tell me where you have seen pottery before? In your homes? At school? In museums? Sometimes it is art but often pottery is very practical and something you use every day! (dinner plates, coffee mugs, your bathroom floor even!)

3. Like we talked about earlier, you can feel how soft and malleable the clay in your hands is, right? How do you think the clay becomes hard to create your final piece? Yes, we cook it! We use a very special “oven” called a kiln that heats up to extremely high temperatures, this process is called “Firing.” If you are baking cookies in your kitchen you probably heat your oven to about 350 degrees – the kiln will heat your clay to about 1800 degrees! That’s as hot as a volcano!

4. Right now your clay looks gray and once you form this clay into your sculpture it will be called Greenware. That Greenware sculpture will sit in this room for about four weeks until nearly all of the moisture has dried out of it. After those four weeks, your piece will be ready for Firing in the kiln. The cooking process takes about 8 hours in the kiln and once it comes out, you’ll notice (show sample) that it turns white, this is called Bisqueware. This Bisqueware is quite hardy and ready for glaze.

5. Now that your piece has been fired, it is time to add some beautiful color. The process of painting your clay is called Glazing and we use very special glaze “paints” for this process. Does anyone know what makes glaze different from normal paints? Glaze is made with silica, which is a natural mineral that turns to glass when heated to high temperatures!

6. Now take a look at these two samples (one glazed and fired, one glazed and unfired). Can you see how shiny this piece is? That is because after you finish Glazing your pieces, we are going to Fire it in the kiln again to make it shiny! This second firing actually melts the tiny pieces of glass in the glaze and adheres it right to your pieces, making it shiny and extra durable!

7. So as you can see, the clay process takes a really long time! Your final piece will not actually be ready for nearly two months! Before we get started, let’s go over a couple rules

1. Do not throw clay
2. Do not ever touch anyone else’s sculpture
3. Do not ever “bend” or “fold” your clay piece\*

\*It is very important that the students do not create any air-holes or air-pockets in their clay; this can sometimes be caused when bending or folding the clay. Remind students not to fold their clay over - air bubbles can sometimes explode inside the kiln.

8. Let’s get started!

### **Technique – Form:**

1. First, before students arrive you will need to pre-cut the clay for each student. On each desk you will have a canvas sheet, the slab of clay, a rolling pin, two dowels, and a small portion cup with slip. To create the slip, simply place a small chunk of clay into a small amount of water and let it soak for about an hour before it is time to use it. The clay will be quite soft and can be mixed to form a slurry that will be used as “clay glue.”

2. Cutting the clay - Using the boxed clay and the clay cutters, each student will receive about a 1” inch slab. This is more than enough to create their piece. (Remember to encourage them to use any excess clay as well, rather than just throwing it away. Maybe they can create a charm for a necklace or a holiday ornament or a tiny bowl – be sure to have them FIRST focus and complete their project but then encourage them to experiment with the leftover pieces.)

\*\*Be careful not to overcut the pieces, use only what you need. One bag of clay should be plenty for one classroom. If you open a bag of clay and do not use the entire bag, be sure to SECURELY tie it shut so it doesn’t harden.



3. Rolling out the clay - For fifth graders, they should be able to roll out their clay but be prepared to help if it is too difficult. When rolling it out, place the two dowel rods one either side of the slab, this will help guide your thickness as you roll out the clay. Your final slab should be the thickness of the dowels.



4. For this project, students will be cutting large circles that will be folded over similar to a taco to form their maracas, they will then use the slip method to adhere the edges together. First, each student will need to create the “beads” for the inside of the maraca.

5. Students will take small chunks of clay and roll them into small beads about the size of the end of their thumbs. Three beads per maraca is plenty. Then students will take small pieces of paper towel, soak them in water and tightly wrap it around each bead separately. Once the beads are securely wrapped in wet paper towel, students will place them in the center of their cut out circle. (This will keep the bead from sticking to the inside of the maraca!)

6. Now students can form their maraca. Gently fold the circle over and match the edges together. Using the slip method, stick all edges together. SCORE, SLIP, SMOOTH! (Slip is the watered down clay that you created before the lesson by soaking a small chunk of clay in water to create a slurry which can be used as “glue” in the clay process. When adhering items to the sculpture, students must first score the surface of both pieces, then gently apply a small amount of slip. Then stick the pieces together and gently smooth the edges to be sure there are no gaps.)

7. This next step is VERY IMPORTANT, carefully using the stylus, students will very gently poke about 5 tiny holes along the FOLDED edge of their maraca. This will allow air to escape during the firing process. Once the holes have been pierced, student can use their texture tools to texturize the entire maraca. Once the student has completed their sculpture encourage them to step away from it before they begin to “overwork” the project.

7. Be sure to remind students to GENTLY carve their names into their sculpture. Now very carefully move the pieces to the drying racks, they will stay there for four weeks until you fire them. Paper bowls will be removed before the firing process. \*\*Please refer to the kiln instructions when loading and unloading your classroom’s sculptures.

### **Technique – Glaze:**

1. Have sculptures out and ready for glazing when students arrive. Shake glaze well and then pour into small plastic portion containers. Only three or four colors to start, you can pour additional colors upon request. Be sure to use the glaze brushes inside the clay cabinet for glazing!

2. Students should use the colors as they are – DO NOT MIX GLAZES! Show the students the glazed tile samples that explain the color differences. One coat will show up quite light, multiple coats will make darker colors once fired. Encourage the students to glaze several coats! IMPORTANT – be sure to not get any glaze on the bottom of the piece! If any glaze drips onto the bottom, be sure to use a wet wipe to rub it off as soon as possible.

\*\*All pieces must have a clean surface, completely free of glaze, to set down on the kiln shelves. If any glaze touches the kiln shelves, the heat can cause it to fuse to the shelves; the piece can then be shattered in an attempt to remove it.

3. After students are done, docents can use the clear coat glaze to go over any missed spots. Then move pieces to drying racks for one week until you fire them. \*\*Please refer to the kiln instructions when loading and unloading your classroom’s sculptures.

8. Once pieces have been fired, docents will arrange a time with your teacher to bring wrapped pieces to classroom for taking home. Be sure to use the bubble wrap or newsprint to securely wrap the pieces before sending them home in backpacks!

### **Summary/Art Quiz:**

1. Once students have cleaned up their work area. Remind them what they learned today.

2. Can anyone tell me what art techniques we learned? And do you remember what tools we used? What was your favorite part of this lesson? Use the Art Quiz Door Poster for reference.