# Lesson 3: Clay (Middle School)

## Objectives:

This lesson involves using clay to shape small symbolic and useful objects. Students experiment with using materials, tools, and their hands. Students will create objects that can be displayed and then used.

## National Arts Standards:

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

* VA:Cr2.3.5a: Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.
* VA:Cr2.3.6a: Design or redesign objects, places, or systems that meet the identified needs of diverse users.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

* VA:Cr3.1.4a: Revise artwork in progress on the basis of insights gained through peer discussion.
* VA:Cr3.1.6a: Reflect on whether personal artwork conveys the intended meaning and revise accordingly.

## Enduring Understanding:

* People create and interact with objects, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.
* Artists and designers develop excellence through practice and constructive critique, reflecting on, revising, and refining work over time.

## Essential Questions:

* How do objects, places, and design shape lives and communities?
* How do artists and designers determine goals for designing or redesigning objects, places, or systems?
* How do artists and designers create works of art or design that effectively communicate?
* What role does persistence play in revising, refining, and developing work?
* How do artists grow and become accomplished in art forms?
* How does collaboratively reflecting on a work help us experience it more completely?
* How do objects, places, and design shape lives and communities?

## Materials:

* Clay/Play-Doh
* Clay sculpting tools
* Files, toothpicks, pencils, spoons, butter knives, sticks, pencils, rolling pins
* Sample simple objects (mug, ball, bowl, dish)

## Directions:

1. Begin by discussing the objects in our daily lives and their functions.
2. Then, consider their design. What evidence of design can you find when considering the example objects?
3. Provide students with moldable materials (clay, Play-Doh, etc.) and “tools.”
4. Have students manipulate materials while discussing the everyday objects they use and how they use them.
5. Ask students to create a container that can hold or do something important for them in their daily lives. The contained can be practical and useful or purely symbolic.
6. Ask students to carefully consider and be deliberate about their use of surface textures and shapes.
7. Circulate while students work, asking questions about their process, ideas, plans, and intentions.
8. Stop students for a walk + talk around the class.
9. Remind students to be careful with people’s work. Ask the artist presenting whether they are comfortable with allowing others to touch their object or whether they would rather describe it.
10. Have students ask questions and provide feedback.

## Extension Ideas:

1. Have students continue to work on their objects and/or revise based on feedback.
2. Decorate the objects (paint, dye, surface scratches, and texture).
3. Use the objects as molds for creating clay objects, by spreading clay around the outside or inside of a bowl or top/bottom side of plates.
4. Have students create pieces using molds and hand-shaped objects to compare/contrast.
5. Create a gallery show and audio gallery guide.

Reference:

Visual arts at a glance. (2021, November). <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Visual%20Arts%20at%20a%20Glance%20-%20new%20copyright%20info.pdf>