



## Lesson Plan #44

# Basic Clay Animal In-The-Round

by Penny Lycan



*Dragon created by Makita Utz, Robinson High School, Robinson, Illinois and decorated with AMACO® Gloss glazes.*

Animals have been a part of human history since the beginning. They have fed us, clothed us, helped us, and been part of the family for centuries. As such, artists throughout the centuries have depicted them in their art. Even creatures from mythology have come to life in art.

This lesson teaches elementary students to create a basic clay animal sculpture. While this lesson shows the making of a dragon, any creature can be made using these techniques. This lesson encourages a student's creativity and imagination.

## Tools & Materials

- Drawing Paper
- Pencils
- AMACO® Low Fire White Art Clay No. 25M (45015Y)
- AMACO® Lead Free Low Fire "LG" Gloss Glazes
- AMACO® Lead Free Low Fire "F" Semi-Opaque Glazes
- Assorted AMACO® Brushes
- AMACO® Scoring Tool
- Assorted AMACO® Wooden Tools
- Plastic Bags
- AMACO® Sponges
- Optional: Clay Wedging Board or Canvas Covered Board

## Technique



1. Have the students sketch three different views of the animal in the style they have chosen. These views should be from the top, side and front.



2. Provide students with a lump of clay about 8 to 10 inches square. Show them how to wedge the clay to prepare it for sculpting. For younger students, you may want to give them clay which has already been wedged.

3. There are two main methods which may be used for sculpting their animal.



4. One method (which the dragon illustrates) is to start with a round ball of clay for the body, push your thumb into the ball, and then pull and pinch the clay into the unique features of the animal you are creating.

5. The other method is to start with the clay in the basic shape of your animal and then carve away clay until you are left with the shape you are trying to achieve.

6. Make sure students are aware that with each method, it is important to keep the clay thickness roughly the same so the clay will dry evenly.

7. Show students how to use a slightly moist sponge to smooth rough spots they may have.

## Lesson Plan Goals and Objectives

- Students will create a 3-dimensional animal sculpture.
- The lesson will incorporate art history, aesthetics, and criticism with a hands on activity.
- The lesson focuses on ceramic techniques, design elements, as well as self-expression.

This lesson is suitable for grade school students.

## National Visual Arts Standards

- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and culture.
- Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.
- Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

8. Students may add texture or detail with various ceramic sculpting tools.

9. Have student sign their last name on the edge or base of the piece

10. Allow the clay to dry slowly by placing in open plastic bag for one day.

11. After one day of drying, the clay will be close to a leather-hard stage. This is a perfect time to carve in finer details or add incised designs.

12. After the students are sure their sculpture is finished, have them wrap the piece loosely with the plastic bag. For the third day of drying, have them remove the plastic bag and let their sculpture sit until it is completely dry (greenware stage). Greenware must be bone dry before firing or it may crack or explode in the kiln. Have students check for dryness by touching the piece to a cheek or the inside of their wrist. The clay will feel cold if not completely dry. One may also see darker patches of color in the clay which indicates moisture is still present.

13. Once the clay is bone dry, bisque fire to Cone 04 at a slow speed.

14. Have the students select the glaze colors they desire then show them how to apply the glaze by brushing on three coats. The coats should be applied in a "cross-hatch" manner with the first coat side to side, the second coat up and down and the third coat side to side. This will guarantee an overall coverage of the glaze. Let each coat dry before applying the next.

15. Once the sculptures are glazed, fire a second time to Cone 05 at medium speed.

*Written and developed by Penny Lycan, an art teacher at Robinson High School from Robinson, Illinois.*

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