

3D Emoji Sculptures

Creative Clay: Sculptural

Best suited for elementary/middle school students.

Duration: 1 90-minute session, 1 30-minute session for decorating

Learning Goal(s): Students will reflect on their own emotions and how they present them through facial expression. They will then construct and paint a small 3D emoji out of clay.

Learning Objective(s): Students will (1) associate facial expressions with emotions, (2) will consider how their own faces reflect their emotions, and (3) will learn how to construct a 3D freestanding object using pinch pots.



Big Question(s): (1) How does my face change when I am upset? Angry? Excited? Hungry? (2) When do I use emojis to communicate instead of words?

Skills/Necessary Demos: Session 1 - pinch pot construction, slipping and scoring (scratching and attaching); Session 2 - painting, glazing

Ceramic Terms ([Claymobile Vocabulary Terms](#)):

- Clay
- Pinch Pot
- Coil
- Slip and Score (scratch-and-attach)
- Underglaze
- Glaze
- Bisque Fire (bisqueware)
- Glaze Fire (glazeware)

Other Related Terms:

- **Emoji** - a small digital image or icon used to express an idea, emotion, etc.

Variations/Modifications:

- Students can wrap small pieces of clay (blueberry sized) in newspaper and put them inside the emoji to make a shaker. The newspaper keeps the clay from sticking to the walls and will burn out in the kiln.
- Pieces can be finished in multiple ways. Emojis can be: (1) bisque fired and then glazed in a second session, (2) underglazed while leather hard and left bisqued/unglazed, or (3) bisque fired and then “cold finished” with acrylic paint or watercolor

Cultural/Artistic References:

- Article - [Emojis: Tools for Emotions](#) from Psychology Today
- Article - [Teaching Mindfulness of Emotions with Emojis](#) from Mindful Schools
- Classroom Poster - [Connecting 2 Pinch Pots](#) from The Clay Studio

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Session 1 Materials:

- Clay (3 pieces per student)
- Scoring tool (or fork)
- Needle tool (or skewer)
- Slip (or water)
- Newspaper or scrap paper

Session 2 Materials:

- Underglaze*
- Clear glaze *
- Paint brushes

*Colored gloss glaze can be used in lieu of underglaze and clear glaze.

Construction Process:

Session 1 (90 minutes)

	ACTIVITY	STEPS	DISCUSSION POINTS
1	Make two pinch pots	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each student will need 3 pieces of clay. 2 for making pinch pots and 1 piece of clay for decorations. 2. Roll the 2 pieces of clay for pinch pots into even spheres. 3. Open each ball of clay into a pinch pot by pinching the walls evenly all the way around. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walls should be totally even and about the thickness of a pointer finger. If they are too thin they might tear or crack. • Try to keep both rims the same circumference and the bottom round. Holding the clay in one hand while opening instead of setting it on a table helps to keep the pinch pot from flattening on the bottom.
2	Combine pinch pots into a sphere	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stuff both pinch pots with crumpled newspaper. 2. Slip and score the rims of both pinch pots and press together with the openings facing each other to combine. Smooth together the seam. 3. Gently tap and roll the combined pinch pots into an even sphere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The newspaper will help the emoji hold its shape and will burn out in the kiln. • Students can wrap a coil around the joint and smooth it out to strengthen the connection if necessary.
3	Make emoji features	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using the third ball of clay, sculpt the emoji's features. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use slabs and a needle tool to cut out features like eyes, glasses, hearts, or stars. • Use coils for linear features like a mouth or eyebrows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask student to consider what emotion to conveyed with the expression being sculpted. • Keep in mind that they will be painted later - either layer coils and slabs for more 3D effects or leave slabs simple for details to be painted later.
4	Attach features onto sphere	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Slip and score to attach the features to the sphere. 2. Smooth any visible scratches or rough edges. 3. **Poke a small hole at the bottom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible scratches or rough edges may get sharp after the firing. • The air trapped inside the emoji will expand in the kiln, potentially blowing up the piece if there is no hole to let the air escape.

Collect all projects and fire them in the kiln.

Construction Process:
Optional Session 2 (30 minutes)

	ACTIVITY	STEPS	DISCUSSION POINTS
1	Underglaze	1. Paint bisqued pieces with underglaze.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Modification/Variation: Student can paint with colored gloss glazes rather than underglaze and clear glaze.</i>
2	Clear glaze	2. Once underglaze is dry, coat with clear glaze. Be sure to leave the bottoms of the pieces clean.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is glaze on the bottom of the piece, it will fuse to the kiln shelf during firing. Sponge bottoms of pieces to ensure no glaze remains.

Collect all projects and fire them in the kiln.

National Core Art Standards:

Creating - Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.
 Anchor Standard #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
 Anchor Standard #2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
 Anchor Standard #3. Refine and complete artistic work.

Connecting - Relating artistic ideas and work with meaning and external context
 Anchor Standard #10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Pennsylvania Standards for the Arts and Humanities:

9.1. Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts
 E. Know and demonstrate how arts can communicate experiences, stories, or emotions through the, Contemporary, Futuristic, others).

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How do you feel today?

 LOVED	 HAPPY	 CONTENT	 SLEEPY	 SAD	 HEARTBROKEN	 STRESSED	 WORRIED	 ANGRY
 ESTATIC	 WARM	 AFFECTIONATE	 SHOCKED	 ANXIOUS	 HESITANT	 CONFUSED	 DEPRESSED	 BETRAYED
 INTELLIGENT	 LUCKY	 CONFIDENT	 SKEPTICAL	 SCARED	 HELPLESS	 DISAPPOINTED	 IRRITATED	 EXPLOSIVE
 ACCEPTED	 HOPEFUL	 PLAYFUL	 HOPELESS	 INVISIBLE	 FRUSTRATED	 POWERLESS	 DISGUSTED	 VIOLENT
 STRONG	 SILLY	 GOOD	 UNSURE	 EMPTY	 WORTHLESS	 GAURDED	 SNEAKY	 RAGE
 UNBREAKABLE	 EXCITED	 ABANDONED	 LOST	 ALONE	 REJECTED	 TOXIC	 HURT	 OVERWHELMED



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