

Bead Bottles (art + social studies)

Beads have forever been popular for jewelry and personal adornment for the wealthy. The most colorful and intricate form of beading is currently created by the Huichol people, who live in the Sierra Madre mountains of Central Mexico. This tribe of less than 20,000 values the healing power of love and the simple agricultural life. It is said that these simple people have never experienced war or violence. Their life is spent creating unbelievable artwork for ceremonies of love.

Bead bottles are the result of studying Huichol beaded gourds. Their technique can be applied to 3D objects available to students. Hours and hours of dedication are involved in the small bottle art.

Grade Levels 5-12

Process

1. One bottle for each student. Keep designs simple. Use black marker to pre-sketch a design on bottle. Remember the beads do not create perfect edges.
2. The sculpture wax provides a firm base for the beads. Roll a marble size piece between fingers to make it pliable. Gently pull off a small piece, spread and push it onto the area to be beaded. Beading can be worked in sections following the marker design on the bottle. The whole bottle can be covered also for abstract drawings. Make sure to apply the wax evenly about 1/16" thick.
NOTE: Beeswax comes in color and is much softer. It works well for younger children
3. Use a small paper plate or small box top to hold and spread the beads so a selection of color is easier to access.
4. The "T" pins will pick up the beads and apply them to the waxed design area. Younger children can use rounded toothpicks for safer application.
5. Beads can be removed and substitutions made. After the bottle is covered, check for uneven surface areas. Gently push beads again for more even surfaces.



Materials:

[Microcrystalline Sculpture Wax](#), (33115-1006) 1-lb block or [Honeycomb Beeswax](#), Natural, (61145-1375) box of 6 sheets, one box per 36 bottles

[Sand Art Bottles](#) (62908-1019), large size assortment, need one per student

"T" Pins, (66901-0000) box of 35, need one per student

[Sharpie Fine Point Marker](#), Black (21316-2001) share 3-4 across the class

Each bottle uses about 1-1/2 oz. of beads. Recommend:

[Indian Seed Beads](#) (60725-) 3-oz packages of assorted single colors

[Opaque Seed Beads](#) (60770-1030) 8-oz multi-color packages

[Rochailles Seed Beads](#) (60770-1010) 8-oz multi-color packages

[Luster Seed Beads](#) (60770-1020) 8-oz multi-color packages

Options

- Use bigger beads and beeswax for younger children
- Styrene sheets can be beaded upon

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National Standards

Content Standard #3 — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

5-8

Students integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks

9-12

Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

5-8

Students analyze, describe and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art.

9-12

Students differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art.