

# Animal Masks

from Mayco® Colors

This lesson gives students the opportunity to explore the history and function of masks in various cultures ranging from ancient times to contemporary uses. Students will be able to learn and master basic hand building and sculpting techniques. This project can be completed with either self-hardening clay or clay requiring kiln firing.

A three-dimensional mask will be created by rolling and laying a slab of clay over a slump/hump mold. Next, students will trim excess clay. Finally, students will sculpt and attach relief features to the mask using methods such as cross-hatching. Once the mask is complete, allow to dry. For programs using clay requiring kiln firing, bisque fire according to directions. Students can apply Mayco Crystalites™ glazes to create a mask that fully embodies the cultural significance of a specific time period and cultural function. Or, for masks made from self-hardening clay, acrylic paints may be used to create color.

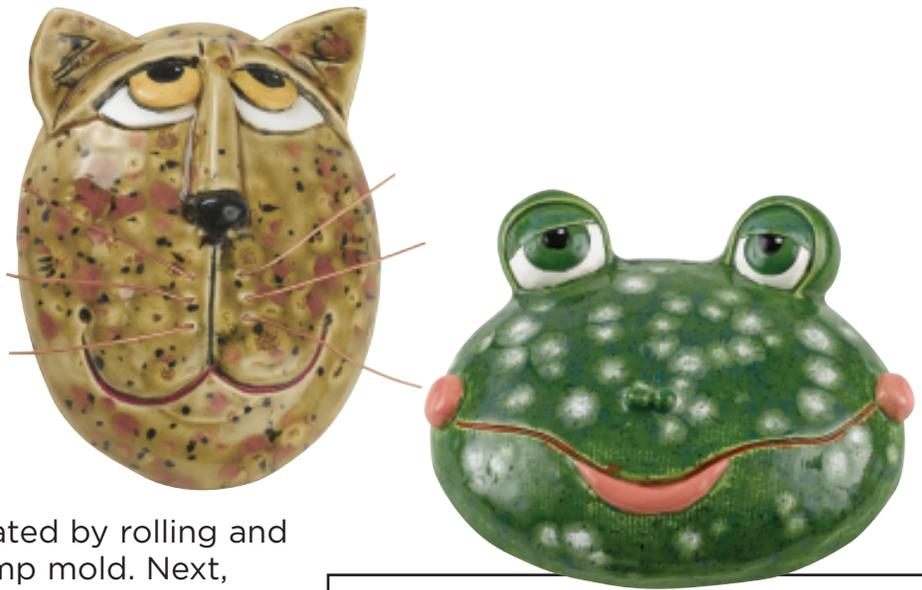
**Grade Levels** K-6

## Prerparation

1. Select the clay to be used based on the color of the clay desired and whether the pieces will be kiln-fired or left to air-dry.
2. Check the consistency of the clay to ensure that the clay will easily stick together when joined. If clay is too stiff, drip some water into the bag, seal it and allow the moisture to be absorbed, preferably overnight.

## Process

1. Discuss role of masks throughout history. Show pictures of various examples of masks from around the world and their purpose. Ask students for examples in today's world.
2. Roll out clay using a rolling pin to approximately 1/4" thickness. Clay should be large enough to fit over the mold, approximately 12 inches.
3. Press clay into oval mold. Both the slump and hump parts of the mold can be used for lessons in concave and convex.
4. Trim around flange edge of mold and remove extra clay.



## Materials

### For Fired Masks

Amaco® Clay, 50-lb carton, either [No.67 Indian Red Earthenware Clay \(30506-3050\)](#) or [No. 25 White Clay \(30505-1025\)](#)

[Mayco Crystalites™ glazes \(30455-\)](#)

[Amaco® F-Series glazes \(30406-\)](#)

### For Non-Fired Masks

Amaco® Self-Hardening Clay, 25-lb, either white [Stonex \(33247-1025\)](#), gray [Marblex \(33204-2525\)](#) or red [Mexican \(33205-3025\)](#)

[Amaco® All-Purpose Sealer, 8-oz jar \(34900-1008\)](#), optional

[Blickrylic Economy Acrylic Paint \(00711-\)](#)

### Both Projects

[Mayco Oval Slump & Hump Mold \(30391-1020\)](#)

[Rolling Pin \(30323-1024\)](#)

[Synthetic Sponge \(32902-1000\)](#)

[Student Modeling Tool Canister \(30387-1001\)](#)

[Dynasty® Ruby student synthetic brush assortment \(05198-0729\)](#)

### Optional

Additional embellishments such as wire, feathers, leather, twine, etc.

Glue or Epoxy

## Process, continued

5. Smooth out the edges of the mold with a damp sponge.
6. With a clay tool, draw the features of the chosen animal. If desired, a pattern can be created for students to use.
7. Using some of the trimmed off clay, form the facial features. With a needle tool, score these features and the area where they are to be attached. Make clay slurry with small balls of moist clay scraps; add a little water, let sit until clay softens, stir. Brush slurry onto areas for attachment. Clean up the area around the facial features with a damp sponge.
8. Remove the mask from mold when it is firm enough to hold shape.
9. If desired, use a needle tool to make a hole on each side for hanging the mask once it's finished.
10. Allow to completely dry.
11. To finish, decorate the mask according to the clay used:
  - Self-Hardening Clays: After drying completely, paint with acrylics. After paint is dry, cover mask completely with AMACO® All-Purpose Sealer to seal and strengthen.
  - Firing Clays: Bisque fire to Cone 04 after drying completely. Apply Mayco® Crystalites™ glaze of choice on the face, and AMACO® F-Series glazes for the eyes, nose and mouth, using color to enhance detail of the hand-built design. Fire to Cone 06. If desired, add any additional embellishments and a hanger.

## National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

### K-4

Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

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

### K-4

Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures