

Sculpture - Kokopelli

Kokopelli (koh-koh-**pell**-ee) is a humpbacked flute player that has been sacred to Native Americans of Southwestern United States for thousands of years. Kokopelli can be found painted and carved on rock walls and boulders throughout the region. The image of Kokopelli has survived from ancient Anasazi Indian mythology and is still a prominent figure in both Hopi and Zuni tribal legends.

Kokopelli is considered a symbol of fertility that brought well-being to the people, assuring success in human conception, hunting, and in the planting and growing of crops. According to San Ildefonso legend, Kokopelli was a wandering minstrel who carried songs on his back, trading new songs for old ones. According to this legend, Kokopelli brought good luck and prosperity to anyone who listened to his songs. His flute was said to symbolize happiness and joy.



Kokopelli image



Teacher-created example

Target Group: Grades K - 8

Goal (Terminal Objective): Students will learn about the Native Americans of Southwestern United States, some of their legends of Kokopelli, and create him using air dry clay.

Objective: Students will use air dry clay to make Kokopelli, capturing the movement of his body.

National Standards:

Visual Arts Grades K-8 Content Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

Visual Arts Grades K-8 Content Standard 2: Using knowledge of structures and functions

Visual Arts Grades K-8 Content Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject

matter, symbols, and ideas

Visual Arts Grades K-8 Content Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Visual Arts Grades K-8 Content Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

Visual Arts Grades K-8 Content Standard 6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Purpose: Students will learn about Native Americans of Southwestern United States, the legends of Kokopelli, and how to create him using air dry clay.

New Vocabulary: Kokopelli, mythical, legend, petroglyphs, sculpture

Materials:



#22-2003 Sculpt-It! White Re-sealable Tub



#17-63,64,65xx Art-Time Tempera



#56-6010 Natural Hair Brush Assortment

Photos of Kokopelli from Google *Images* search, , water, wood or other suitable heavy surface for a base, , hot glue gun

Time: Two or three art periods depending on how intricate Kokopelli is painted.

Introduction and Motivation (Set):

Ask students if they know the difference between a fact and a legend. Ask for or provide examples of each.

Tell them the origin of the mythical Kokopelli and some of the legends about him. Show pictures of Kokopelli and include photographs of some of the actual petroglyphs (rock carvings), if available.

The teacher will play Native American flute music, such as *Flute Dreams* by Alice Gomez, *Native Spirit*, or the music of Carlos Nakai, while the students work.

Instruction: The students will begin by selecting a picture of Kokopelli, using this as a

reference as they work. Younger students will work along with the teacher.

Begin by using Sculpt-it! to create one section at a time. Adding water to pieces to be joined will aid in adhesion. Smooth areas out with fingertips, adding a drop of water if necessary, and working the water into the clay thoroughly. Smooth out all joined pieces and add a very small coil of clay to the seams, working the coil into the seams so that the seams will disappear. Do not allow the clay to become too thin. Use flattened balls, rectangles, and coils to create the Kokopelli of choice and keep about the same thickness.



Adding small coils of clay to seams



Finished Kokopelli ready to dry

Allow Kokopelli to dry thoroughly.

Activities:

(1) Guided Practice:

1. Students will begin by selecting a picture of Kokopelli. The students will capture the implied movement of Kokopelli as shown in their picture.
2. Use the Sargent Art Sculpt-It! air dry clay to form a section at a time. Roll the clay into balls, coils, and form rectangle blocks of clay. Gently flatten these shapes out and attach them to each other by dipping the end of the pieces to be joined into water. **DO NOT ALLOW THE CLAY TO BECOME TOO THIN** as this may allow pieces to later break off easily.
3. Smooth out all seams where pieces have been joined together, using water and very small coils of clay as the work progresses.
4. Allow the sculpture to dry thoroughly. Apply color with Sargent Art acrylic paint with Sargent Art brushes.
5. Attach to a wooden or other suitable base.

(2) Independent Practice and Check for Understanding: Teacher will circulate around the students making sure that the objectives are being demonstrated, asking direct questions when understanding is not visible. Teacher will help with the clay work when necessary and reinforce students as they work.

(3) Closure: Students display their work and a critique will be utilized to look for strengths in successful projects.

Evaluation: Teacher will evaluate the works individually based on the following criteria:

Level One -- The finished project indicates movement of Kokopelli, like being bent over or back similar to the examples shown in the pictures supplied to the class. Clay has been smoothed out and seams have been minimized where sections of the clay have been added. The sculpture is even in thickness. The finished sculpture has been painted to cover all of the clay and the wooden base. Craftsmanship is excellent.

Level Two -- The finished project does not indicate movement of Kokopelli, like being bent over or back similar to the examples shown in the pictures supplied to the class. Clay has been smoothed out in some areas, and some seams are visible where sections of the clay have been added. Most of the sculpture is even in thickness. The finished sculpture has been painted to cover most of the clay and the wooden base. Craftsmanship is good.

Level Three -- The finished project does not indicate movement of Kokopelli, like being bent over or back similar to the examples shown in the pictures supplied to the class. The clay has lumps and has not been smoothed out in areas so as to minimize where sections of the clay have been added. The clay has not been kept to the same thickness, allowing some areas to become thin while others are thick. The finished sculpture has been painted to cover some of the clay and the wooden base. Craftsmanship is variable.

Level Four -- The finished project does not indicate an understanding of the objectives or the directions given to the class. The finished sculpture does not look like any of the pictures of Kokopelli supplied by the teacher to the class. Clay has not been smoothed out and added sections have broken or fallen off of the sculpture. Most of the areas are too thin from pressing down too hard during the forming process. The finished sculpture has not been painted to cover the clay and the wooden base. Craftsmanship is poor.

Extension: Students could draw and paint Kokopelli as he looks on the rock petroglyphs. Spraying water on sandpaper allows the sand to be removed using a nail to scratch into the sandpaper imitating actual petroglyphs.

Resources:

<http://phoenix.about.com/od/shoppingandservices/g/kokopelli.htm>

<http://www.kokopellinursery.com/LegendofKokopelli.htm>

http://www.runningrockart.com/images/f106_3koko.jpg

BY MERI LEE
Art Consultant