

## Southwestern Concho Jewelry

The Navajos are famous for their silver Conchos that are used in belts and jewelry. Many different styles and shapes of Conchos exist today and can be seen by doing a Google *Images* search.



Imitation Concho and turquoise

**Target Grade:** Grades K-8

**Goal (Terminal Objective):** Students will learn about the Navajo use of Conchos in making belts and jewelry and be able to make an imitation Concho that will be used in a necklace or as a pin.

**Objective:** Students will create reproduction Conchos using air dry clay and use it to create a piece of jewelry.

### **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 be able to use air dry clay pressed into molds made of air dry clay to create a reproduction Concho to be made into a pin or a necklace.

**New Vocabulary:** Concho, Navajo, mold, impression, silversmith, pendant

**Materials:**



#22-2203 Sargent Art Sculpt-It! White Re-sealable tub



#22-2399 Sargent Art Acrylic paint



#25-2399 Sargent Art Metallic Acrylic Paint



#56-6012 Natural Hair Rainbow Brush Assortment



#22-1696 Individual White No-Spill Paint Cup

Paper clips opened on one end, cornstarch or talcum powder, wooden shish kabob skewers, yarn or *Stretch Magic* Optional: *Amaco* bead rollers

**Time:** Two or three art periods depending on how many beads each student is required to make.

**Introduction and Motivation (Set):**

Ask the students if they know what a Concho is. Show them pictures of Conchos found by doing a Google *Images* search. Explain to the students the history of the Concho being made by the Navajo silversmiths.

## **Instruction**

Note: It will require that the teacher make the impressions of Conchos into the air dry clay a few days prior to the lesson to assure that the molds will be dry.



Mold being made from a Concho

Students will select a mold and lightly dust it using cornstarch or talcum powder. These may be placed into a sock to make the dusting process easier.

Use a small ball of Sargent Art Sculpt-it! air dry clay to press down into the mold. Lift the clay impression straight up. Trim off clay from around the edge and cut out the holes using a paper clip that has been opened on one end.

Use more clay to form a pendant such as an arrow head, a bear, or other Native American symbols. Poke a hole through the pendant using the wooden shish kabob skewer.



Arrowhead-shaped pendant



Making holes into a bead

Make beads from the air dry clay. The number of beads required will depend on if the finished piece will be a pin or a necklace. A necklace will require more beads. An *Amaco* bead roller may be used if beads need to be uniform in size or shape.

## **Activities:**

### **(1) Guided Practice:**

1. Students will roll the clay into a ball prior to pushing it into the dusted mold also made of air dry clay. Lift the clay straight up out of the mold. Trim and allow drying to begin.
2. Use more clay to form a small pendant. Use the wooden stick to poke a hole through the clay.
3. Roll out beads from the clay and push the wooden stick through the beads to form a hole. The number of beads will be determined by what the finished piece will be. A necklace will require more beads than a pin.
4. Paint the beads, Concho, and pendant with acrylic paint. Use the Liquid Metals Acrylic Paints on the Concho and some of the beads. Glue a pin back onto the

finished Concho or string a necklace using yarn or *Stretch Magic*.

(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. Younger students will participate in a teacher-guided critique to help them learn the process.

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

Level One -- The finished project has a Concho with a clear impression made from the mold. Excess clay had been trimmed and the edges smoothed out. The Concho and pendant are even in thickness. Beads are well crafted and sufficient to finish the piece. The finished piece has been painted to cover all of the clay. Craftsmanship is excellent.

Level Two -- The finished project has a Concho with a clear impression made from the mold. Most of the excess clay had been trimmed and the edges smoothed out. The Concho and pendant are even in thickness. Beads are well crafted but not consistent in size and are sufficient to finish the piece. The finished piece has been painted to cover most of the clay. Craftsmanship is good.

Level Three -- The finished project has a Concho with a clear impression made from the mold. Most of the excess clay has not been trimmed nor all or the edges smoothed out. The Concho and pendant are not even in thickness. Beads are not all well crafted or consistent in size and are not sufficient to finish the piece. The finished piece has been painted to cover some of the clay. Craftsmanship is variable.

Level Four -- The finished project does not have a Concho with a clear impression made from the mold. None of the excess clay has not been trimmed nor all or the edges smoothed out. The Concho and pendant are not even in thickness and are not recognizable as such. Beads are not well crafted or consistent in size and are not sufficient to finish the piece. The finished piece has not been painted to cover the clay. Craftsmanship is poor.

**Extension:** Students could make molds and create jewelry of any type. Students could also do research about the Navajos and learn about their woven rugs.

**Resources:**

[http://www.americana.net/jewelry\\_history\\_article.html](http://www.americana.net/jewelry_history_article.html)

<http://www.adobeclassic.com/category48/index.html>

<http://www.skystonecreations.com/History2.html>

BY MERI LEE  
Art Consultant