

PAPIER-MÂCHÉ TOTEM POLES

Developed with Beverly Niehaus
Eagle River, WI
Grades 4-6



TIME

8 class periods (45 min. each)

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Work cooperatively with a partner to create a three-dimensional sculpture that will become a section of a totem pole
- Connect their artwork to their study of Native Americans in their social studies curriculum
- Gain an understanding of the totem pole as an art form of the Native American culture



STANDARDS

- A.4.4** – Learn about styles of art from various times.
- B.4.1** – Understand that artists and cultures throughout history have used art to communicate ideas and to develop functions, structures, and designs.
- B.4.3** – Know that works of art and designed objects relate to specific cultures, times, and places.
- C.4.6** – Use sketching to develop ideas for their artwork.
- C.4.7** – Develop basic skills to produce quality art.
- D.4.6** – Use problem-solving strategies that promote fluency, elaboration, and originality.
- E.4.1** – Communicate basic ideas by producing studio art forms, such as drawings, prints, sculpture, jewelry, fibers, and ceramics.
- G.4.1** – Know that art communicates ideas.
- H.4.4** – Create three-dimensional forms with paper, clay, and other materials.
- I.4.5** – Understand that art is made by people from different times, places, and cultures.
- I.4.7** – Work alone and with others to develop visual ideas and objects.
- K.4.1** – Connect their knowledge and skills in art to other areas, such as humanities, sciences, social studies, and technology.



TIPS

To introduce this project, show photos, slides, or a video of Native American totem poles. Discuss the 3-D forms and symbolism of the animals on the totem poles. Connect this project to other areas of the curriculum and to American art history.

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students. Have them brainstorm ideas for an animal design that could be made into a 3-D section of a totem pole. Students should do three final sketches showing a front view, side view, and top view so they can visualize the 3-D areas of their sculpture.

Demonstrate construction of 3-D facial features, wings, antlers, etc., using newspaper, cardboard, and masking tape. Encourage experimentation with crinkling, rolling, bending, stacking, and wrapping the newspaper and cardboard together to construct the forms.

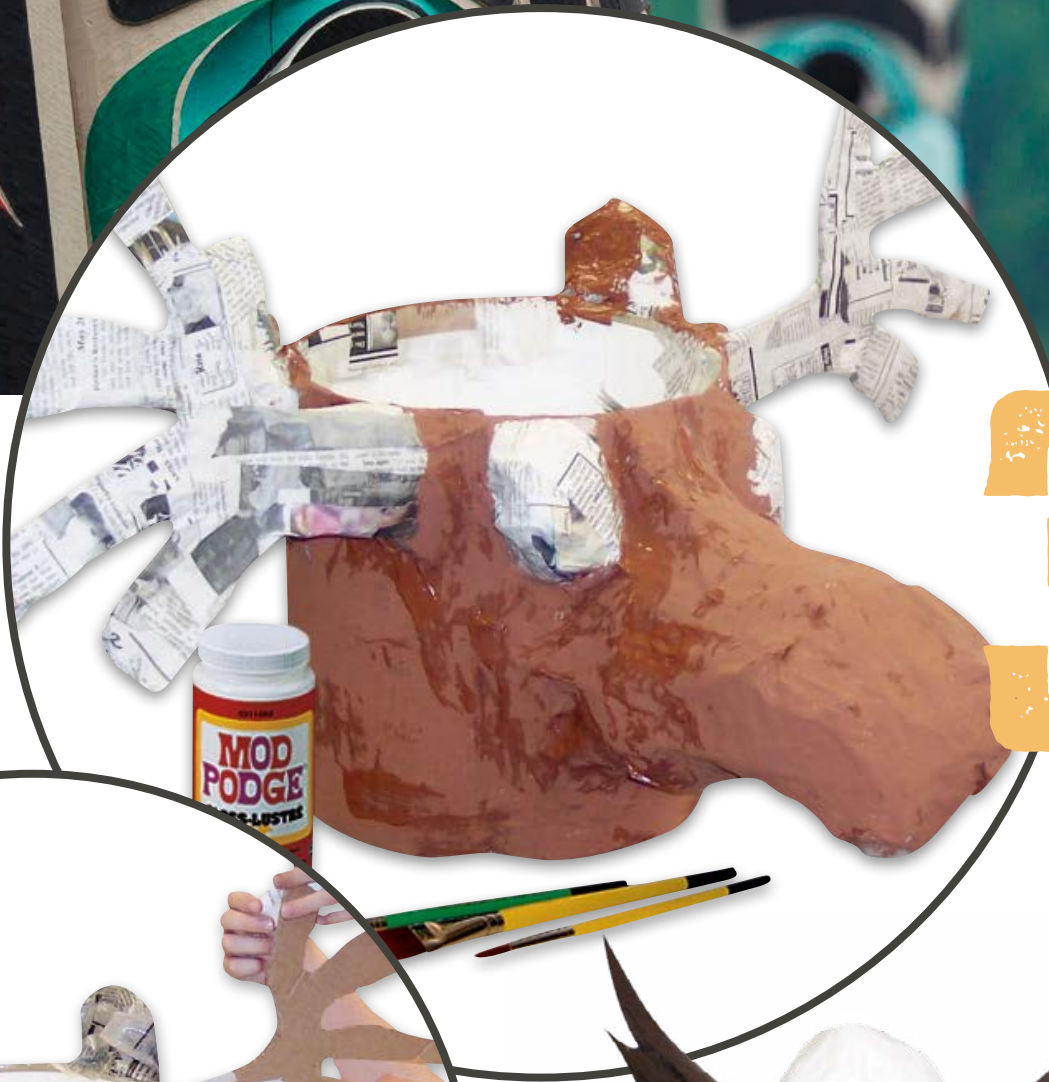
Demonstrate papier-mâché techniques of dipping newspaper strips in the paste, and wrapping all areas of the forms attached to the container. Stress the importance of smooth and complete application of the strips in 3-4 complete layers. Our motto is “no flaps, no gaps.”

INSTRUCTIONS:

1



1. Each group will begin with a container as the base. (The cardboard ice cream tubs from your local ice cream shop make excellent bases. Students can store their sketches and supplies inside the container between class periods, and the containers stack easily to take up very little storage space in the classroom.) Students should build up their appendages, and tape them securely to the container.
2. Mix a 2-oz. box of Elmer's® Art Paste in a 5-qt. ice cream pail of water. This will make enough for the entire class. Give each group a small bowl of art paste. Remind them to dip the strips of newspaper completely and to wipe off the excess before applying them to the sculpture. They should apply 3-4 complete layers during the next two class periods.
3. When dry, students can paint their sculpture with tempera paint. Finished work can be coated with Mod Podge® Gloss-Lustré.



3

2



DISPLAY:

Stack the sculptures 5-8 sections high.

Cut circles of cardboard slightly larger than the diameter of the container to place between each section for stability. Your students will be thrilled with the results!



MATERIALS LIST

- Scotch® Painters' Masking Tape, 60 yds. — 9720465
- Elmer's® Art Paste, 2 oz. — 8100197
- Nasco Premium Grade Tempera Paint, 1 qt. assorted colors — 9705920(A-L)
- Mod Podge® Gloss-Lustré, 1 gallon — 1100504

Additional recycled materials

- Newspaper
- Cardboard
- Cardboard ice cream tubs (9½"-10" H). Ask your local ice cream shop to donate.

VARIATION: ANIMAL HEADDRESSES

Developed with Cheryl Scott and Tricia Couch
West Palm Beach, Florida

- Same materials as Totem Poles
- Adapt to create your headpiece
- Use plastic buckets, pop bottles, and other recycled materials
- Decorate with yarn, string, raffia, etc.



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