

Marine Animal Sculpture Project

Grade Level: Middle School (6th–8th Grade)

Unit Theme: Sculpture & Environmental Awareness

Exploring Form, Texture, and Environmental Design

Objectives

- Create a 3D sculpture of a marine animal using recycled materials.
- Demonstrate an understanding of form, texture, and proportion.
- Explore environmental themes and ocean conservation through art.
- Apply problem-solving and collaboration when constructing sculptures.
- Use appropriate art vocabulary in written and verbal reflections.

Enduring Understanding

Artists can use sculpture to explore and raise awareness about environmental issues like ocean pollution and marine life conservation.

Essential Questions

- How can we use art to represent the beauty and fragility of marine ecosystems?
- What sculptural techniques help create realistic and imaginative textures?
- How do materials affect the form and function of a sculpture?

Vocabulary

- Sculpture
- Form
- Texture
- Armature
- Proportion
- Recycled Materials
- Environmental Art
- Surface Detail
- Assemblage
- Adhesive

Standards Addressed

- VA:Cr1.1 – Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- VA:Cr2.1 – Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- VA:Re7.1 – Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- VA:Cn10.1 – Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Materials Needed

- Cardboard, plastic containers, paper towel rolls, newspaper
- Scissors, masking tape, hot glue, glue sticks
- Paint, brushes, Mod Podge
- Wire, pipe cleaners, tissue paper, foil
- Visual references of marine animals
- Sketchbooks

Instructional Procedures

Introduction & Planning

- Begin with a discussion: Why is marine life important? What are some threats to ocean ecosystems?
- Show a short video or slideshow on ocean animals and marine conservation.
- Introduce the project prompt: Design and build a 3D sculpture of a marine animal using recycled materials.
- Students brainstorm and sketch at least 2 marine animal ideas in their sketchbooks.
- Discuss texture and form—demonstrate how to build structure using an armature.

Construction Begins

- Review vocabulary: form, texture, armature, proportion.
- Students begin constructing their marine animals using recyclables and adhesives.
- Teacher circulates to assist with technical skills and problem-solving.
- Emphasize texture and scale.

Finishing Touches & Presentation

- Students paint and add surface detail to their sculptures.
- Mini artist statements: students write 2–3 sentences about their marine animal and what it represents.
- Class shares and reflects on each other's work in a "gallery walk."
- Discussion: How did your materials shape your final piece? What do you want your viewers to notice?

Formative Assessment

Observation of planning sketches and collaboration

Completion of sculpture demonstrating techniques

Use of vocabulary during class critique

Written artist statement reflecting intent and process

Differentiation/Accommodations

- Allow ESE students to work with partners or simplified forms.
- Provide physical examples and texture samples.
- Offer extra support in construction techniques.
- Use visuals and sentence starters for artist statements.

Extension Opportunities

- Connect to science by researching marine animal habitats.
- Create a class mural or installation on ocean conservation.
- Submit sculptures to a local art show or environmental awareness event.

