

Little Howlers



an Early Childhood
art Lesson





Step 1

Before you can start making your clay sculpture you need to make some clay glue. Clay glue is called slip. To make slip you break off some small grape-sized chunks of clay and let them completely dry out. You can dry your clay chunks in the sun or simply leave them in the open air overnight. When they feel dry put them into a small plastic container and add enough water to just cover the clay. The clay will break down as it absorbs the water. This process is called slaking. When the clay is done absorbing the water it will look soft and mushy. This mushy stuff is called slip and it is applied between clay pieces to glue them together.

Step 2

Make these forms to build your sculpture:

- 1 large form in the shape of a potato for the body
 - 1 small sphere the size of a grape for the head
 - 1 short cylinder for the snout
 - 1 tiny form in the shape of a pea for the nose
 - 2 tiny cones for the ears
 - 5 cylinders about 2" inches long and thick like a marker for the legs and tail.
- Slightly curve 3 of the cylinders like in the photograph below.

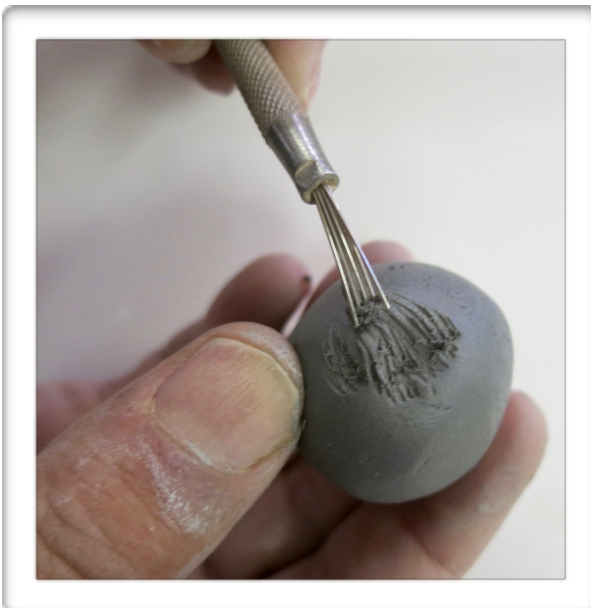


Step 3

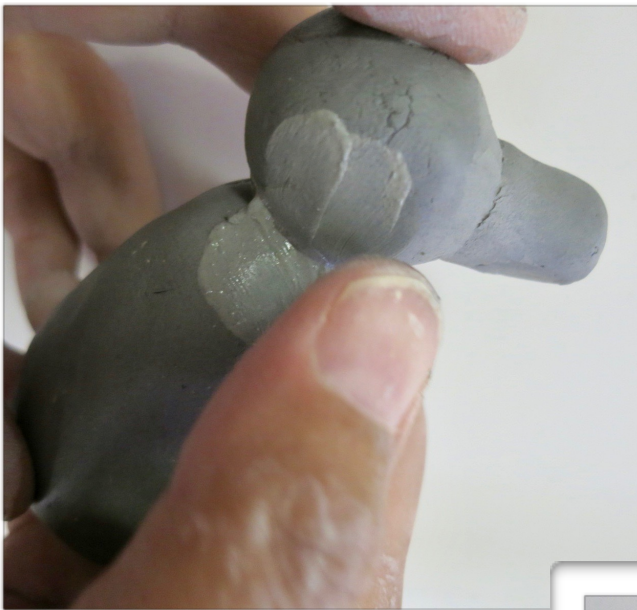
Now you can start to join the forms together. Forms stick together best when they are scored and slipped. To score the clay you will need to rough it up by making hatch marks using a scratching tool like the ones in this picture. A metal scraping rib, fork, tooth brush, scratch wire brush, or a needle tool all work well to make scoring marks. Even a sharpened pencil works great. Scoring is a key part of attaching one piece of clay to another.



Score the sphere that was made for the head and the end of the cylinder that was rolled for the snout. Apply the slip over the hatch marks. Now they are ready to be joined together.



Smoothing two pieces of clay together with your finger helps to ensure that the two pieces become interlocked, creating a more durable sculpture.



Step 4

Attach the head to the body and smooth the two pieces together.



Step 5

Attach two of the curved cylinders to the side of the body to create the back legs of the animal.



Step 6

Score, slip and attach the two straight cylinders to the front of the body.





Step 7

Slightly bend the ends of the cylinders upward to create the feet.



Step 8

Attach the two cones for the ears.



Step 9

Use a pointed tool to draw the inside of the ears.



Step 10

Attach the sphere on the end of the snout.



Step 11

Insert the end of a popsicle stick to open up the mouth and indent in the eyes.





Step 12

Make the tail by attaching the remaining curved cylinder to the back of the body and smooth it onto the bottom.



Step 13

To allow the animal to completely dry out for the kiln firing, push a hole in the bottom of the sculpture with a pencil. This will allow the sculpture to dry out fully before it is fired in the kiln. This hole also allows moisture in the clay to escape as steam during the firing process.





Step 14

To make the animal's fur use a pointed tool like a pencil to press in lines on the body. Use the pointy tip of the tool to press in the toes on each foot.





Step 15

Allow the clay to dry out before firing to cone 04.

Step 16

Glaze the sculpture and fire in the kiln one last time.

