

LESSON PLAN

REGAL CREATURES OF MYTHOLOGY

Suggested Levels: Middle School to Advanced

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In this lesson, students will explore the rich world of mythical creatures from various cultures, focusing on their regal qualities and sculpt powerful animals or mythical beings that embody qualities like strength, wisdom, and grace. Through research, sketching, and hands-on sculpting, students will create unique ceramic representations of these creatures, emphasizing their noble characteristics and symbolic meanings. This project will enhance students' understanding of mythology, improve their ceramic skills, and foster creativity.

Step into a world of elegance and mystery, where students will bring to life regal mythological creatures. In this ceramic art project, students will sculpt their own interpretations of majestic animals or mythical beings, such as lions, dragons, eagles, or other inspiring creatures. As they shape and texturize their sculptures, students will learn essential clay techniques, explore the symbolism of their chosen creatures, and capture the qualities that make them both powerful and enchanting. Through this process, they will transform clay into sculptures that tell a story of regality and resilience, adding finishing touches with rich textures and colors.

OBJECTIVES

I CAN... develop my skills in three-dimensional sculpting.

I CAN... investigate the characteristics and symbolism of regal mythical creatures.

I CAN... understand animal anatomy, form and texture.

NATIONAL VISUAL ART STANDARDS

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

- Students explore how personal inspiration, and imagination can drive the creation of unique and symbolic sculptures.
- Students will research and sketch mythical creatures, using the creative process to develop unique sculptures.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

- Students experiment with clay techniques and structure, organizing their ideas to develop a regal creature that embodies specific qualities.
- Students will explore the cultural significance of mythical creatures and connect their artworks to broader themes in mythology and storytelling.

Refine and complete artistic work.

- Through reflection and critique, students refine their sculptures, learning to balance craftsmanship with expressive elements.

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

- Students analyze the symbolism of animals and mythical creatures in art, enhancing their understanding of how visual qualities convey human values and ideals.

MEET THE MASTER



Charles Noke

(1858-1941) was a prominent British ceramic artist best known for his work at Royal Doulton. Joining the company in 1889, Noke flourished under its progressive artistic philosophy, which encouraged creative freedom. He became renowned for his finely detailed figurines and was particularly skilled in depicting animals, capturing their character and movement with remarkable realism.

His animal figures, such as elegant birds and whimsical farm animals, showcased his talent for blending lifelike qualities with artistic expression and his vessels are glazed in royal like jewel tones. Noke's work not only elevated the status of ceramic art during the early 20th century but also inspired future generations of artists to explore similar themes. His legacy endures through the collectible pieces that remain popular among art enthusiasts.

"There is a delight in beauty that inspires every artist to create." – Charles Noke



SUPPLY LIST

CLAY

- Clay body of choice

BRUSHES AND TOOLS

- Clay cutting tools
- Canvas sheets
- Slip containers and scoring tools
- Sponges
- Modeling or loop tools
- Newspaper and tape to build armature or cardboard cone
- Found objects/texture plates
- Rolling pins or a slab roller



This project features Mayco's [Stroke & Coat®](#) glazes. These glazes are perfect for the Regal Creatures because they offer a dynamic range of colors that bring the creatures to life.

Stroke & Coat® provides vibrant, consistent coverage that allows students to add fine details and bold patterns, essential for highlighting the unique features of their creations.

Though traditionally low-fire glazes, Stroke & Coat® colors have a wide firing range, spanning from cone 06-10. This allows for an adaptable lesson plan, regardless of firing temperature in your art room.



INSPIRATION

Mythical creatures are considered regal due to their symbolism, attributes, and associations and can be used to convey themes of nobility, strength, and beauty in art and storytelling. Here are some examples:

Dragon: Often portrayed as powerful and majestic, dragons are frequently associated with royalty and guardianship in various cultures.

Griffin: Combining the strength of a lion and the majesty of an eagle, griffins are seen as noble creatures that guard treasures and sacred places.

Phoenix: Symbolizing rebirth and immortality, the phoenix is often depicted in a regal manner, embodying beauty and grace.

Unicorn: Representing purity and enchantment, unicorns are often associated with nobility and are depicted in elegant ways.

Pegasus: The winged horse from Greek mythology is often associated with divine inspiration and heroism, embodying a noble spirit.

Sphinx: With its regal posture and human head, the sphinx represents wisdom and mystery, often depicted as a guardian of sacred places.

Qilin (or Kirin): A creature from Chinese mythology that resembles a deer with dragon-like features, often associated with good fortune and noble qualities.

Nemean Lion: A fearsome lion from Greek mythology. It is often depicted as a powerful and regal beast, symbolizing strength and courage.

These creatures can be used to convey themes of nobility, strength and beauty in art and in storytelling.

ACTIVITY

Exploring Mythical Creatures and steps to create a Regal Creature of Mythology

1. Introduction to Mythical Creatures

- Discuss the significance of mythical creatures in various cultures (e.g., dragons, griffins, unicorns).
- Highlight their traits, roles, and the symbolism associated with them.

2. Idea Generation and Sketching

- Students brainstorm and select a mythical creature or create an original one.
- Encourage them to sketch their creature, focusing on unique features and attributes, while annotating their design with notes about its symbolism and story.

3. Introduction to Sculpting Techniques

- Demonstrate fundamental hand-building techniques (pinching, coiling, and slab construction).
- Discuss how to create texture and detail that reflects the creature's characteristics

4. Sculpting Session

- Students begin creating the head of their mythical creatures, using their sketches for guidance.
- Encourage them to think about posture, expression, and how to incorporate textures that enhance the creature's identity.
- Use a cardboard cone or construct one from paper and tape to form a body shape that can be draped in a clay slab to resemble a cloak. Attach feet at the bottom of the long cloak and position the head on top where the body and cloak meet. Incorporate regal elements such as a large decorative belt, a crown, or a neckpiece, and include additional details to emphasize the royal theme.

5. Peer Sharing

- Have students share their progress in small groups, discussing their creative choices and any challenges they face.

6. Refine and Dry

- Carefully refine the details of your creature, smoothing any rough edges or cracks. Make sure there are no weak spots in the structure, Let the creature dry slowly and evenly to avoid cracking, covering it lightly with plastic or storing in a damp box.

7. Bisque Fire the Creature

- Once completely dry, the creature is ready for its first (bisque) firing in the kiln.

8. Glazing Techniques Overview

- Mayco's Stroke & Coat® is ideal for the creatures' fixed details, as it provides vibrant, consistent coverage that highlights intricate patterns and features with precision. Mayco's Crystal Gems glaze is perfect for the creatures' regal wardrobe, offering dynamic bursts of color and texture that create a luxurious, magical finish fit for their majestic designs while influencing the mood and narrative of their creatures.

9. Glazing Session

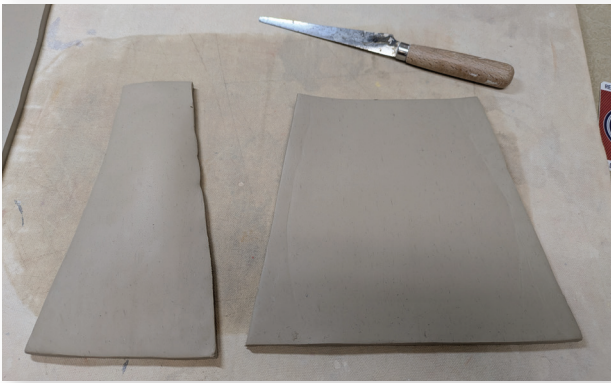
- Students apply glazes to their fired sculptures, focusing on choices that reflect their creature's personality and story.
- Encourage them to think creatively about color combinations and finishes.

10. Final Firing

- Fire the glazed piece in the kiln for one final time, completing your regal mythological creature.

DIRECTIONS

1. Begin by rolling out a slab of clay large enough to accommodate both the front and back slab of what will become the cloak and body of the regal creature. Compress the front and back of the slab with a plastic card. Map out two elongated trapezoidal shapes on the clay slab with a toothpick, one thinner than the other and about half as wide. Cut these out of the slab with a clay knife.



2. Stand the two trapezoidal shapes up on end together to form a cone-like shape. The larger trapezoid should overlap the smaller one to give the illusion of cape fabric. Score and slip the shapes together. Manipulate the edges of the larger slab to create motion like fabric folds. Cut off any excess clay to create the neck space.



3. Roll a large coil, about an inch and a half thick at one end and taper it to a point that is approximately 7 inches long. Score and slip the thick coil to the bottom and back of the cloak. This will become the tail. Bend the tail coil to give it movement but allow multiple points of contact to reduce breakage. Roll a few long, thin coils about the width of a pencil. Score and slip a portion of the coil up and over the tail to make it look like the tail is coming out from under the cloak. Score and slip the remainder of the coils around the edges of the large outer cloak. Using a stiff bristle brush, pounce texture into the coil to give it the look of fur trim.



4. Using a fist size ball of clay, manipulate to create a fat boot shaped chunk of clay. This will become the head and arched neck. Map out the facial features with a toothpick and begin carving the basic face shapes on the arched neck using a reductive carving technique with your choice of tools (jaw, ears, brow ridges, horns, nostrils). When the basic shapes have been carved it, use the clay knife to cut the piece in half from the top. Scoop out the excess clay and scratch and attach the two halves back together to create a hollow form. Leave a hole in the bottom for moisture to

DIRECTIONS

evaporate. Finish carving the face details, and score and slip to the body/cloak.



5. Add details to the piece. The quilted effect is created by carving intersecting lines to develop diamonds, attaching small balls of clay at the points where the lines intersect, and using a toothpick to create a starburst line effect around the small balls of clay. Spikes are made for the head and tail by flattening out a coil and cutting a zig zag shape into it. Flattened coils are also used to create the crowns around the horn and tail. Carve a swirly floral pattern into the outside of the cloak. Eyes are small balls of clay pressed into the eye socket divot.



6. Allow project to fully dry and bisque fire to cone 04.
7. Use a variety of Stroke & Coat colors to finish your creation. Try brushing a coat over detailed areas and wipe back with a damp sponge to highlight textures. Three coats will give you solid coverage. Colors can also be blended wet into wet to create blends.
8. Glaze fire to cone 06.



EXTEND THE LEARNING *using Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory*

LINGUISTIC (Word Smart)

Have students write a descriptive paragraph about their creature, focusing on its appearance, powers, and habitat which will enhance vocabulary and descriptive language.

Write a poem or haiku inspired by their creature, focusing on imagery and emotion while exploring poetic forms and figurative language.

SPATIAL (Picture Smart)

Design a diorama that showcases their creature in its natural habitat, considering foreground, middle ground, and background elements. Creating an understand of spatial organization and depth in composition.

Experiment with light sources to see how shadows and highlights affect the perception of their creature's form. This will help in creating an understand of the role of light in defining three-dimensional space.

INTERPERSONAL (People Smart)

Students maintain a journal throughout the project, documenting their thoughts, feelings, and challenges faced while creating their creature while fostering self-awareness and critical reflection on their creative process.

Reflect on what traits of their creature resonate with their own personality or experiences and write about it enhancing self-discovery and understanding of personal identity.

BODY KINESTHETIC (Body Smart)

Students present their creatures through role-playing, acting out a scene or story involving their mythical creature to the class which will encourage physical storytelling and develop public speaking skills through movement.

Practice quick gesture sketches of their creature in various poses, emphasizing movement and form to assist in developing an understanding of dynamic form and how it translates into sculpture.

NATURALIST (Nature Smart)

Students research the natural habitats of mythical creatures and create a visual representation of their creature's environment while connecting their understanding of ecosystems with artistic expression.

Investigate different biomes (e.g., forests, deserts, oceans) and how mythical creatures could adapt to these environments, then present findings. This will aid in fostering appreciation for biodiversity and adaptability.

LOGICAL/ MATHEMATICAL (Number Smart)

Have students calculate the proportions of their creature by measuring and scaling different parts, ensuring accurate representation in their sculpture to develop skills in measurement, ratios, and proportional reasoning.

Conduct a survey among classmates about their favorite mythical creatures, then analyze the data using charts or graphs providing practice collecting data, analysis, and representation through mathematical concepts.

INTRAPERSONAL (Self Smart)

Create a visual board representing their artistic identity, including influences, inspirations, and aspirations related to their creature. This will help students articulate their personal artistic style and vision.

Write an artist statement that explains their design choices and what their mythical creature represents personally. This will help develop skills needed in articulating personal artistic vision.

MUSIC (Music Smart)

After completing their creature, students choose a piece of music that reflects their creative journey and write a reflective piece about why they chose it. This will encourage personal reflection and deepen the connection between their artistic process and musical expression.

Analyze the lyrics of songs related to mythical themes or creatures, discussing how they can inspire their own creative work. This will aid in the development of critical listening skills and understand thematic connections in music and art.

RUBRIC

	4 - EXCELLENT	3 - GOOD	2 - SATISFACTORY	1 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
CREATIVITY & ORIGINALITY	Highly original design with unique elements.	Creative design with some unique features.	Basic design with minimal creativity.	Lacks originality; follows common patterns.
TECHNICAL SKILL	Mastery of ceramic techniques; flawless execution.	Proficient in techniques; minor flaws.	Basic understanding; several noticeable flaws.	Lacks understanding of techniques; major flaws.
DETAIL & COMPLEXITY	Highly detailed; intricate features and textures.	Good detail with some complexity.	Limited detail; simple features.	Minimal detail; very simplistic.
CONCEPT & THEME	Strong connection to the regal mythical theme; well-executed concept.	Clear theme connection; concept mostly clear.	Some connection to the theme; concept vague.	Little to no connection to the theme; unclear concept.
FINISHING TECHNIQUES	Exceptional glazing and finishing; enhances the work.	Good glazing and finishing; enhances but could improve.	Adequate glazing; some issues with finish.	Poor glazing and finishing; detracts from the work.
PRESENTATION	Well-presented; shows effort and care in display.	Good presentation; mostly neat and organized.	Basic presentation; lacks attention to detail.	Poor presentation; messy or careless.

This rubric provides a clear and balanced way to assess both the technical and creative aspects of the project, while also encouraging student reflection and effort throughout the process.

Total Score: ____/24

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

20-24 POINTS (A): OUTSTANDING WORK, WITH HIGH LEVELS OF CREATIVITY, CRAFTSMANSHIP, AND ADHERENCE TO THE THEME REFLECTING CONSISTENT EFFORT AND ENGAGEMENT.

15-19 POINTS (B): GOOD WORK, DEMONSTRATING CREATIVITY AND SOLID CRAFTSMANSHIP. SOME MINOR FLAWS, BUT THE PROJECT MEETS EXPECTATIONS.

11-14 POINTS (C): FAIR WORK, WITH SOME CREATIVE EFFORT AND BASIC CRAFTSMANSHIP. SEVERAL AREAS NEED IMPROVEMENT.

7-10 POINTS (D): PROJECT LACKS CREATIVITY OR CRAFTSMANSHIP, WITH NOTICEABLE ISSUES IN CONSTRUCTION OR ENGAGEMENT.

BELOW 6 POINTS (F): INCOMPLETE OR RUSHED PROJECT WITH MINIMAL EFFORT OR ENGAGEMENT. FAILS TO MEET THE BASIC CRITERIA.