

STUDIO PRODUCTION

(one to two class periods)

Some premade examples of coral models may be helpful during studio work. Explain to students that the coral they each make will be arranged with all the other coral sculptures to represent a reef. Students may want to work together to make their coral, as they share ideas and opinions. Remind students that the coral reef display will need some bleached (white) coral since one goal is to teach about the bleaching that is happening to coral. You could have students make a second pinch pot base that will be textured but left unpainted, or have some fast workers make extras of these to share in the coral reef display.

Demonstrations

Gather students for demonstrations in between letting them experiment with the clay. It is helpful to have a student volunteer or two following your lead so the class can watch a peer try out the demonstrated techniques. In general, guide students in making a roundish base for their coral, adding sculpted detail, and experimenting with creating texture.

Demonstration 1: Make a coral base from clay

Show how to make a small pinch pot base for the coral. Hold a small 2-3 inch ball of clay in one cupped hand. Show students how to roll the ball from their piece of clay. Press into the ball with the opposite thumb to make a hole but not all the way through to the bottom. Turn the ball of clay a quarter turn or so in your hand while pinching with your thumb and forefinger of the other hand; continue turning and pinching until clay forms a cup-like shape with walls about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Remind students to not pinch too hard or the clay walls will get too skinny. If the walls get too thin, the cup may collapse. Note: This method can be tricky. A second way that can be helpful for some students is to have them roll the clay into a ball and then scoop out the inside with a clay loop tool to hollow out the ball. After the cup-like shape is formed, they can smooth out the inside and outside of the clay. The coral cup shape can be placed open end up, or be turned upside down for varied coral shapes. Show students how to label their coral cups with the rubber alphabet stamps, adding, for example, class number and then student initials.

Demonstration 2: Sculpt details and add texture

Using images for ideas, students can add small shapes to their coral. For example, demonstrate how to make a snake-like roll, cut it into small pieces, and then attach the tube-like pieces to the coral model, using slip as glue. Show how to gently press tools into the clay, or scrape the clay with a tool, or "draw" on it with a pencil to make interesting textures. It can be helpful to have a large slab of clay for students to try out texturing ideas before they carefully apply them to their own coral. Note: If students are choosing a fanciful, exaggerated style such as kawaii, or adding other personified or superhero features for their coral, they can add such features with clay now or later with paint or paper pieces. When coral shapes are finished, allow them to dry completely, then fire.

Demonstration 3: After firing, add paint and paper zooxanthellae

It is time to add color to the fired coral. Let students know that the paint and paper details will represent the zooxanthellae. Watercolor and tempera will each look different on the clay. It's helpful to show students examples of each so they can choose. Show students how to cut small



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paper shapes of colorful papers using a scissors or paper punch (which resembles the round shape of zooxanthellae). These can be glued to the clay coral.

Planning the Display: Help students plan the arrangement of the coral reef display. Returning to Worksheet 2, they can refer to the facts they would most like to share and plan the infographics (signs) that will feature this information and be displayed with the reef. Students may want to work with a partner or small group to create signs. Paper (8 ½ by 11 inches gives students room to letter) rulers, pencils, and markers can be used. Students can draw and color images of soft corals, fish, sea turtles and the like to cut out and place among the clay corals. They can also cut such images out of color copies or from magazines.

CLOSING STRATEGIES

Decide how long to display the coral reef. Talk with students about possible publicity for the project. Students may want to write a letter to the public relations representative at your school, requesting that the project be photographed and featured on the school website.

Reflection

After the installation of coral reef has been shown for a while, you can engage students in a discussion about whether they had any interactions with viewers. Some prompts include:

- Did anyone ask you about the coral reef?
- Did you share the project with anyone, such as family or friends?
- What would you change about our coral reef project, if anything?