

**North Carolina Standard Course of Study
Visual Arts Objectives**
(National standard objectives in parentheses)

Competency Goal 1: The learner will develop critical and creative thinking skills and perceptual awareness necessary for understanding and producing art.

1.03 Develop strategies for imagining and implementing images.

Competency Goal 2: The learner will develop skills necessary for understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes. (*National Standard 2*)

2.04 Produce visual effects and textures using each media.

Competency Goal 5: The learner will understand the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

5.03 Identify selected medium/techniques or processes used for individual artwork. (*National Standard 4*)

5.04 Become aware of the ideas of time and history (what came before and after).

Competency Goal 7: The learner will perceive connections between the arts and other disciplines. (*National Standard 6*)

7.01 Understand that a major purpose of the arts is the creation of original work.



ABSTRACT OR GOAL OF THE LESSON: Students will learn how Native Americans used the pattern on turtle shells to track the phases of the moon throughout the year, and then students will model their own ceramic turtle and glaze it.

KEY OR FOCUSING QUESTIONS:

- How did Native Americans explain the changing of the seasons and the passing of time before they had paper calendars?
- What kind of materials did Native Americans use to create their works of art?
- How did Native Americans teach their children before there were schools?

Clay Turtles

VOCABULARY:

Pottery

Wedge

Coil

Storytelling

Shapes

Texture

Clay

Glaze

Slab

Lines

Pattern

Color

Kiln

TOOLS, SUPPLIES AND RESOURCES:

- Diagram/poster of the scale pattern on a turtle shell
- Samples of real turtle shells
- Clay texture tools (pencils, popsicle sticks, plastic forks)
- Kiln and equipment for firing pottery

MATERIALS:

- Clay
- Kraft paper to cover tables
- Ceramic glaze

Books: *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back* by Joseph Bruchac and *Kanahena, A Cherokee Tale* by Susan Roth

LINK TO PRIOR LEARNING OR EXPERIENCES:

- Use of elements and principles of design to create artwork
- Arts and literacy connections
- History and culture of North America

TOPICAL CONNECTIONS:

Social Studies: Native American culture

Science: Changes in seasons, Marking time's passage

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS TO THE VISUAL ARTS OBJECTIVES:

Social Studies: Identifying cultural similarities and differences; understanding how cultures marked the passage of time historically, compared to present day methods

INSTRUCTIONAL INPUT:

Read introduction to *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back* and several selections from the different poems/stories about the moons. Explain that Native Americans did not have paper calendars to mark the passage of time. Instead they observed the phases of the moon and the changing seasons. Since the moon has a 28 day cycle, there are "thirteen moons" in the Native American year, instead of twelve months. Show diagram of the turtle shell pattern as well as samples of real turtle shells. Point out that they each have the same basic pattern even though they are different colors. Show the Cherokee turtle rattle and ask students what it might be used for. Ask students what the Native Americans used to create their works of art. Why did they use natural materials instead of going to a mall or a craft store?

Clay Turtles

MODELING:

Demonstrate how to create a clay sculpture of a turtle (or a “turtle sandwich”) by making three balls of clay. Flatten two of these to form the top and bottom of the shell, and form the third ball into three coils (or “snakes”). Make an X with two coils for the feet and shape the third coil into a head and tail shape, press all of these onto the bottom shell shape, and put the top shell on (to create the “sandwich”) Press together and add face, feet, and shell patterns with the texture tools. Show students how to incise names on the bottom and place gently into a cardboard box to dry.

GUIDED PRACTICE: Students will wedge clay, break into three pieces, and roll into balls with the teacher. They will flatten two into slabs and roll the third one into three coils with the teacher.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: Students will build their clay turtle sculpture and create textures and patterns for the face, feet, and shell. They may choose to make a “thirteen moon” pattern, or create their own design.

REVIEW AND CLOSURE: Students will place names on their sculptures, clean up their work area, and carefully place their artwork in a box to dry. The class as a whole will discuss the variety of shapes, sizes, patterns and textures found in individual objects. When the clay sculptures are fired, teacher and students will discuss color and the properties of ceramic glaze. Teacher will read *Kanahena, A Cherokee Tale* of how the turtle’s shell got cracked. The pieces will be glazed and fired again.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION:

- Teacher observation
- Oral and written statements about finished artwork
- Display of artwork

