

# Polymer Clay

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## What is it?

Polymer clay is a pliable polymer compound that artists and crafters use. It is not a true clay (which is silica based), but it behaves in a similar way. Polymer clay comes in lots of colors which allow the artist to blend colors or apply techniques such as cane-working and marbling.

Polymer clay is very forgiving and can be reworked repeatedly. It does not dry out quickly and can be fired using a regular oven. Unlike regular clay, color and size does not change during firing.

## Preparation

Tables should be clean, but do not need to be covered,

Clay needs to be prepped for use – the easiest way to do this is to allow the students to knead the clay for five minutes before they begin shaping their sculpture.

## Techniques to Try

- The best way to form legs, tails, heads, etc. is to pinch a small amount of clay away from the clay ball into the desired shape. Pulling small pieces of clay off and reattaching it tends to cause the leg/tail/ears to fall off during the drying process.
- Pencils work great for adding small details such as pressing the tip into the clay to make eyes, fur textures, etc.
- You may want the students to carve their initials into the bottom of their piece (a pencil works well).
- After firing, polymer clay can be painted or colored with markers. Paint can be thinned down with water to create a stain effect.
- After adding color, the pieces can be sprayed with a gloss spray to add shine.

## Clean-up

Students should throw away any scraps of clay and they need to wipe their tables down with a damp cloth/paper towel.

All unused clay should be placed in Ziploc bags.