

Title: Halloween & Day of the Dead Skeletons
Subject/Grade: Art, Grade 5
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Lesson Plan Summary: In this lesson, students will explore form and learn about the cultural and artistic traditions surrounding the celebrations of Halloween in the United States, and Day of the Dead in Mexico. They will then use this new understanding to create individual bones which will later be connected to form a complete skeleton. The students will finish this project by decorating and dressing their skeletons. Creating one full size skeleton will require four, 40 minute class periods. There is a mandatory drying time between class periods.

Objectives:

The students will communicate ideas about themselves, their family, their school, and their community using sensory knowledge and life experiences. **TEKS § 117.17. Fine Arts (5.1)(A)**

The students will learn appropriate vocabulary to discuss the use of art elements; color, texture, form, line, space, and value and art principles such as emphasis, pattern, rhythm, balance, proportion, and unity. **TEKS §117.17. Fine Arts (5.1)(B)**

The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media within their appropriate skill set. The student is expected to integrate a variety of ideas about self, life events, family, and community in original artworks; design original artworks; and invent ways to produce artworks and to explore photographic imagery, using a variety of art media and materials. **TEKS §117.17. Fine Arts (5.2) (A,B,C)**

The students demonstrate an understanding of art history and culture as records of human achievement. The student is expected to compare cultural themes honoring history and traditions in American and other artworks; and compare cultural themes honoring history and traditions. **TEKS §117.17. Fine Arts (5.3)(B)**

The students will make informed judgments about personal artworks and the artworks of others. **TEKS §117.17. Fine Arts (5.4)(A,B)**

The student recognizes the basic structures and functions of the human body and how they relate to personal health throughout the life span. The student is expected to describe the structure, functions, and interdependence of major body systems. **TEKS §115.7. Health (5.2)(A)**

Lesson Objectives:

Students will further explore form by creating individual bones and arranging their bones into large group sculptures. The process will use and reinforce the *Elements of Art* (<http://tides.sfasu.edu/Teachers/tides/docs/LessonPlans/Elementary/artsTheater/RipleyElements.html>) and *Principles of Design* (<http://tides.sfasu.edu/Teachers/tides/docs/LessonPlans/Elementary/artsTheater/RipleyPrinciples.html>).

html). The students will learn cultural artistic traditions based in the USA and Mexico, centered on celebrations which occur at the end of October.

Discussion:

Day of the Dead and Halloween are the Mexico and United States holidays associated with the end of October. Day of the Dead is a celebration for people who have passed away. Have the students refer to [Day of the Dead](#) lesson by Estella Soberon.

(<http://tides.sfasu.edu/Teachers/tides/docs/LessonPlans/Elementary/socialPlans/SoberonHalloween.html>). Halloween traditions have evolved over time. Trick or treating probably comes from England's All Souls' Day parades, where the poor would beg for food, and families would give them cakes in exchange for prayers for the family's dead relatives. This was probably encouraged over time until it developed into what we know as trick or treating. Dressing in costumes comes from the original Celtic roots of this holiday. It was believed that dressing in a costume would hide you from the ghosts.

More Halloween history:

http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content_type=mini_home&mini_id=1076

Focus Activity: Life-sized Skeletons

Technique Discussion: The technique used for this project is *sculpture*. We will create forms to resemble the bones of the human body. Remember, bones are 3-dimensional, which means we can hold them and view the form from all directions. We will use a variety of recycled materials and lots of tape. You can use the tape to hold the form together and mold it the shape it needs to be.

Materials:

- cardboard boxes (especially a large one)
- cereal boxes
- paper towel tubes
- foam inserts
- plastic bottles
- masking tape (2 dozen rolls)
- newspaper strips
- flour and water mix
- large plastic containers
- wire – medium gauge, small roll, needs to be flexible yet strong
- white tempera paint (we used a gallon for 4 skeletons)
- paintbrushes
- black tempera paint
- dress-up costumes or colorful fabric
- Images of skeletons and bones for reference
 - <http://coolest-holiday-parties.shippony.com/images/halloween/misc/skeleton.jpg>
 - <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Skelett-Mensch-drawing.jpg>
 - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Human_skeleton_back.svg
 - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Human_skeleton_front.svg
- Images of student project skeletons on TIDES:
 - <http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/cdm4/results.php?CISOOP1=all&CISOBOX1=ripley%20skel>

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- Images of Catrinas in Mexico:

<http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/cdm4/results.php?CISOOP1=all&CISOBOX1=catrina&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP2=exact&CISOBOX2=&CISOFIELD2=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP3=any&CISOBOX3=&CISOFIELD3=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP4=none&CISOBOX4=&CISOFIELD4=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOROOT=/Tides&t=a>

Note to Instructor: It helps to precede this project with the *Elements of Art Form Activity*.

Instructor Prep work: Pre-cut the cardboard for the rib cage. The cut is similar to a heart, so when folded together will create a rib cage form. On part 2 - pre-mix the Maché paste, which is flour and water mixed into a thick, glue-like consistency

Students Examples: *Link photos and video*

Part 1: Creating the bone forms

1. Have the students work in pairs and assign each pair a set of bones (for example, 2 femurs, 2 hands, etc.). Two students need to work on the ribs, skull and pelvis each. Extra students can help with the rib cage.
2. Pass out bone handouts to each pair.
3. Using recycled materials and tape to create your bone forms. Refer to the handouts for the proper shapes. Note some bones, like our calves and forearms, have two bones connecting into one. These need to be life-sized, so allow the students to hold their bones up to the teacher to make sure the size is correct.
4. USE A LOT OF TAPE
5. For the hands and feet, students can use small boxes as the palm area and then tape rolls of paper on top to resemble the many finger bones. For the rib cage, a large box can be folded around and taped, and then rolls of paper can be taped around the cage to resemble ribs. Finally, tape a piece on top resemble the sternum.
6. Wrap wire around each end of the bones. These will be used to attach the bones together to create the skeleton. Leave at least 4" hanging off the ends. The hands and feet need only one wire out of the top. The pelvis needs three, one for the backbone and each leg. The rib cage needs three on top for arms and the skull, and one on the bottom for the backbone. The skull needs two, the one on top will be used to hang the entire skeleton.

Part 2: Paper Maché the bones

1. Have the students tear newspaper into strips.
2. Dip the strips into the Paper Maché glue.
3. Run the strip, flat, through your fingers to release excess glue.

4. Carefully wrap the strip around your form and rub smooth. **Work fast.** The wet paper Maché will soak into the any cardboard used to create the form. Once the form is to wet it will sag and wilt. Leave the wire hanging out of both ends.
5. Quickly apply the next strip until the form is covered with at least 2 layers.
6. Let dry at least 2-5 days depending on atmospheric conditions.

Part 3: Painting the bones

1. Once dry, paint the bones with white paint.
2. Once dry, paint outlines of bones onto the white form.
3. Allow time to dry.

Part 4: Assembling, Dressing and Displaying the Skeletons

1. Assemble the legs and arms first. Create a small loop of the wire close to the end of the hand. Twist the wire several times. String the wire of the arm bone through the loop of the hand. Loop over and twist and continue with the next bone. Cut off any extra wire.
2. Repeat above process with all legs and arms.
3. Attach skull to rib cage and backbone together. Attach bottom of backbone to pelvis.
4. Attach legs and arms to rest of skeleton.
5. Dress the skeleton in costumes or funny outfits.
6. Hang the skeletons from the ceiling using wire. Use monofilament to hang arms and/or legs into position.

Focus Activity Discussion:

Once the skeletons are completed and on display have the students view the final results. Ask the students if they look like skeletons, how the skeleton makes them feel, and why? Are they scary or funny? Now look at all the individual forms of the bones. Do these look like real bones? Do you see the different proportions of the bones? Some are small and others large, and the order they are in is important to make these look like skeletons. Ask the students whether they felt this was a hard project and to explain their reasons. Ask them how they like their final creation. Finally point out that they have accomplished a group sculpture that is not always an easy project. Congratulations!

Extensions:

Smaller skeletons can be made out of cardboard or craft sticks (toothpicks). Cut out small skeleton shapes out of cardboard. Place rolls of paper on both sides and wrap with tape to create a thick form. Wrap with Paper Maché and continue with paint and costumes.

With craft picks tape together to create a thicker form and add limbs, taping everything together. Create head out of a small ball of paper taped together and then taped to neck. Add small balls of tape or paper to areas to create bone forms. Wrap with paper Maché and continue with paint and costumes.