

**Animal Piñata**  
**Amy Seeley**  
**(Grade Level: Adaptable from K-12)**

**Introduction:**

This lesson will be introducing the students to sculptural techniques in art via a hands-on activity relating to customs and traditions of celebration. It is necessary for students to know how to construct a sculptural object as many art forms include sculptural components. It is also necessary for students to build an understanding, tolerance, and appreciation for customs and traditions that may be different than their own. This lesson incorporates science, language, music, and art. Also included in this unit are the four learning modalities: visual, language, auditory, and fine motor.

**AZ State Standards:**

1. Create works of art that apply media techniques and processes with controlled skill, craftsmanship, confidence, understanding and sensitivity.
2. Apply media, techniques and processes with controlled skill in artwork.
3. Create artwork demonstrating skill and craftsmanship and a sensitivity to the media.
4. Assess progression of skill, craftsmanship, confidence, understanding and sensitivity via an established criteria of one's own artwork.

**Behavioral Objectives:**

The main objective is to instill in students an appreciation and understanding for cultural customs and traditions of celebration that may be different from their own. Students will be required to create their very own distinct animal piñata. They will learn the tradition of the piñata and what a piñata is. Students will work cooperatively on the design and construction of their animal piñata. The objective will be met when students create a sculptural object that reflects the standards outlines, finish their self evaluation, and participate in an in class critique.

Students will be able to:

1. Provide five examples of how piñatas are used with 80% accuracy.
2. Ask two relevant questions about traditions and customs and the use of piñatas with 100% accuracy.
3. Watch a video clip pertaining to customs and be able to answer four of five questions correctly (80% accuracy).
4. Cooperatively work on design and construction of a three dimensional animal piñata with 100% accuracy.
5. Students will appropriately evaluate their own work via a self-evaluation form with 70% accuracy.

**Anticipatory Set:**

1. Ask students to pay attention and begin discussion by asking them what they know about the traditions and customs for specific celebrations in their own culture.
2. Listen to student responses and ask, “Who knows what a piñata is?”
3. Listen to student responses and ask students if they have ever seen a piñata and whether it has ever been a part of their own celebration.
4. For those who say “no” but have seen a piñata ask what their initial reaction was.

**Teacher Input:**

The teacher will start a discussion on traditions and customs of celebration to see what the current knowledge is in these areas. The teacher will also inform the students on what a custom or tradition is. The teacher will use specific resources to explain traditions and customs of celebration. The teacher will use an example of a celebration that includes the custom and tradition of the piñata: The feast day of Our Lady Guadalupe on December 12. Teacher will then use resources to model the construction of a piñata.

Script:

*Teacher:* Does anyone here know what a custom is? How about a tradition?

*Student:* No! (Some may say yes. Teacher will listen to and reinforce correct responses.)

*Teacher:* Try very hard to think of what traditions and customs you may have in your home culture that relate to celebrations. Now remember, we are working on a project that relates to this idea, so try and think of some different ones.

*Student:* How about getting and decorating the Christmas tree or having a birthday cake?

*Teacher:* Very good. We’re on the right path. Do you have any more ideas?

*Student:* How about decorating Easter eggs or fireworks on the 4th of July?

*Teacher:* Good! Now smile if you would like to try and make a piñata! Thank you! Do you have some good ideas already?

**Modeling the Behavior:**

Teacher will call on students to gather at the front table for a demonstration. Teacher will show resources and materials to be used including books, a video and CD. Teacher will demonstrate how to get materials ready, and how to construct and decorate the piñata. Teacher will also ask students if they have any questions or comments they would like to share at this time.

**Check for Comprehension:**

Teacher will question students on the construction. Teacher will emphasize craftsmanship. Students will have prior knowledge craftsmanship and critique and keep the end result of the

critique in mind during construction. Teacher will check for comprehension of traditions and customs through questioning such as what tradition or custom relates to the piñata.

**Guided Practice:**

Teacher will demonstrate how to make paper mache and students will follow specific directions on how to make paper mache while the teacher demonstrates. Students will then practice making paper mache, checking for consistency. Students will then have time to start on their design.

**Closure:**

Students will be able to construct sculptural objects in the future using this paper mache method. Teacher will review concepts learned on tradition and customs of celebrations.

**Independent Practice:**

Students will design their own animal piñata. This design must be drawn out on paper, working through the possible structural problems and solutions. After the student receives an “OK” on the design from the teacher the student may start on construction.

**Activity:**

Create an animal piñata design. After the design has been worked through and it has received the “OK” to go on, the student may begin construction. The student needs to figure out the shapes and forms that will be needed and use balloon shapes and newspaper shapes to construct. After construction of the shapes, the shapes need to be attached through tape, or wire. The next step is to paper mache. Stir up the mache material by hand, 1 cup flour, 1 1/2 cups water and a dash of salt. No lumps! Cut the newspaper into strips and dip strips into the mixture. Lay the strips over the balloon and newspaper shapes. Don’t use too much, or it will take too long to dry. Wring out the strips before laying them on the shape. Smooth and allow it to dry. Let it dry overnight. Repeat the process working through the details such as the facial features. Allow it to dry. Paint. Add tissue paper and the decorative finishing touches such as foil or string. Make a hole at the base of the piñata (in a subtle place), stuff with candy, fill the hole and presto! -“La Piñata!”

Elements of Art and Principles of design utilized:

Line, shape, form, color texture, balance, variety, emphasis, and unity.

**Assessment:**

The student will be assessed through a self-evaluation and in-class critique. I will assess the students as they are working through design and construction.

**Resources and Materials, Cultural Object, and Activity:**

Books:

*El Piñatero/The Piñata Maker* by George Ancona, Animal Illustrations selected by Jim Harter, *The Simple Screamer* by Dan Reeder

Video:

Inside Mexico: Mexican Popular Customs Song/CD: “La Piñata” De Colores by Jose-Luis Orozco

A piñata

Cultural object:

Materials:

Round balloons, old newspapers, flour, water, paint, string, thin cardboard, foil, tape, scissors, and candy!

**Modifications for students with disabilities:**

Modifications would include simplifying the design, and using simplified materials that the student would be better able to manipulate. Visuals and examples will help guide students through the project. Student will have peer tutor to help with construction and manipulation.