

Adopt an Artwork 2025 -2026

Ceramic Spice Jars

Spice Chest, attributed to Joel Baily

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Dover High, Capital School District

10th-12th

Sculpture

OVERVIEW

Students will explore the historical and cultural significance of an 18th-century wooden spice chest attributed to Joel Baily. Through researching its function, craftsmanship, and symbolism as a wedding gift, students will connect history to art by designing and creating their own ceramic spice jars. Emphasis will be on functional art in ceramics, incorporating personal and historical influences into their designs. The project spans 8 classes of 1 hour each and includes sketching, sculpting, glazing, and writing an artist statement.

TIME REQUIRED

Eight 1-hour classes

STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

- VA:Cn11.1.1a — Describe how knowledge of culture, traditions, and history may influence personal responses to art.
- Indicator 1.3 Equitable Access: Students are encouraged to share their interests and/or perspectives to build relationships and connect to their academic work

STUDENT “I CAN STATEMENTS”

- I can explain how historical objects like the 1748 spice chest reflect cultural traditions and personal stories.
- I can design and create a ceramic spice jar that connects to the history and function of the original spice chest.
- I can write an artist statement describing how my ceramic work is influenced by cultural and historical knowledge.

MATERIALS

- Jetec 100 Pack Assorted Cork Stoppers Wine Bottle Corks Plugs 10 Sizes
- Old Potters Low Fire Pottery Clay White, 10 lbs
- Penguin Pottery - School and Studio Pack - Mid Fire Series
- Pottery Brushes for Glazing, 15 Pcs
- Umigy 20 Pcs Clay Needle Tool Pottery Feather Wire Texture Tool
- GUSTO To Go Food Containers with Lids
- Dotting Tools, Silicone Clay Sculpting Tool, Ceramic Clay Ball Stylus

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Lesson 1. Warm-Up Sketch (Class 1)

- Students sketch different spice jar designs inspired by the original spice chest.
- Discussion about the chest's function, hidden compartments, engravings, and historical context.

Lesson 2. Historical Exploration & Visuals (Class 2)

- Present background history of Joel Baily's spice chest, its use in 1748, and significance as a wedding gift.
- Watch videos showcasing the spice chest and other 18th-century functional art pieces, especially ceramics.

Lesson 3. Discussion on Functional Art (Classes 3-4)

- Explore the concept of functional art, focusing on ceramics that serve practical purposes.
- View examples of functional ceramic art from different cultures and times.

Lesson 4. Design Development (Class 5)

- Students finalize their spice jar design sketches incorporating historical or cultural connections, including ideas for personal engravings or decorations

Lesson 5. Sculpting (Classes 6-7)

- Create ceramic spice jars using hand-building or wheel-throwing techniques.
- Add details referencing the original chest (e.g., engravings, compartments, lids).

Lesson 6. Glazing and Finishing (Class 8)

- Apply glazes and prepare jars for firing.

- Discuss finishing touches like cork stoppers or lids.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

- Summative:
 - Students write a 200-word artist statement explaining how their ceramic spice jar connects to the history, culture, and function of Joel Baily's spice chest and their own artistic choices.

VOCABULARY

- Functional Art: Art designed with both aesthetic and practical use.
- Engraving: Carving or incising designs into a surface.
- Stoneware: Durable ceramic fired at high temperatures.
- Earthenware: Ceramic fired at lower temperatures, more porous.
- Hand-building: Creating pottery by hand without a wheel.
- Wheel-throwing: Shaping clay on a rotating potter's wheel.
- Glaze: A coating applied to ceramics to create a glassy surface.
- Kiln: Oven used to fire ceramics.
- Compartment: A separate enclosed space within a container.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- None