

Our Living Landscape



Soil Topic Activity Guide: How to Make a Landscape from Clay

Aim of activity

To make a landscape from clay and consider different landscape features

Resources

Modelling clay (we used air-dry clay)
Fabric/hessian squares, plastic sheets
Rolling pin
Tools for modelling
Sieve or tea strainer

Delivery of activity

We recommend teachers prepare for delivering this activity by watching our video '[How to make a landscape from clay](#)' [\[click here\]](#). Consider whether you want children to make their own individual landscapes, sections of a larger landscape or elements of a specific area they have studied, such as a hedge.



A Step by Step Guide:

1. Introduction

Introduce the activity with some information about the clay material the children will be using e.g.:

- Clay is a natural product made of tiny parts of much bigger rocks. Most soils will have rock components of different sizes from large stones down to small stones and sand like grains. The smallest particles in soils are mud and clay minerals.
- Pure clay minerals are white or light coloured but there are other impurities in the rock such as iron oxide which has turned this clay a lovely reddish brown.
- Clay is flexible when wet because the small rock particles are coated in a film of water. When this water evaporates through air drying or firing in a kiln the tiny particles become hard but brittle.

You can paint the clay once it has hardened or leave it natural.

2. Instructions

- Keep the clay wrapped in a in a cool place until it is needed.
- Take a lump of clay and flatten or roll out to create the form of your landscape. *Is it flat or will there be areas of higher ground?*
- If you place the landscape onto a piece of hessian or old t-shirt fabric, then it will be easy to pick up, turn and add details.
- Stretch and push the clay gently to create hills. Mark out the fields. *Have they been ploughed, or can you show the crops that are growing there? Maybe the grass has been baled and left in the field?*
- Add ponds, streams, fences, hedges, woodland. Try pushing clay through a sieve as it creates great hedges.

For a collaborative project, connect the clay models together to make a giant landscape.



Alternatively, ask each child to model something from their landscape or an area they studied for example:

- Tree, hedge, other plant/s
- Animals (remember vertebrates and invertebrates)
- Man-made features
- Once the clay is dry you can arrange the pieces together to create the perfect landscape.

3. Ask the group to consider the following questions...

What are the main differences between a rural landscape and an urban landscape?

Think about natural, living materials and man-made materials; the ways in which humans and animals shape the land in which they live.

How does the type of soil affect our landscape's appearance?

Think about hills, mountains, coasts, beaches, rivers and streams.

