



# MINING FOR SCULPTURE MATERIALS

Found-object sculpting provides many opportunities for students to practice resourcefulness. This begins with materials. Everyday items can become art materials. Re-usable, found, and recycled materials can make sculpting accessible to you and your students.

## USEFUL MATERIALS

FLEXIBLE **Rigid** Treatable Malleable Textural  
Colorful **Rounded** Natural Fastening  
Common/Collectible.

When gathering, consider these categories of materials. Many of these bridge across multiple categories.

FLEXIBLE / **Rigid** / Common

Examples: Re-used paper products that can be cut with scissors, torn, and/or easily folded.

**Brown paper bags or packaging paper; decorative heavy paper products** (scrap book paper, wall paper, tissue boxes, etc.); **heavy-weight colored paper; cereal-box-weight cardboard, toilet paper inner rolls, etc.**

Common / *Collectible* / Colorful

Examples include: quantities of repeated/same items such as **buttons, plastic bottle caps** of similar size or color, **kernels of corn or seeds, paper clips**, miscellaneous fasteners, **beads...**

**Natural** / **Rigid**

Examples: **skewers & other sticks, stems, wood scraps, bark, rock, shells, etc.**

**Natural** / Malleable / FLEXIBLE

Examples: Durable grasses or sedges; natural-fiber string/rope (ie. jute, etc.); Clay or other modeling/molding material - small quantities to start with (more on clay in a separate document)

Malleable / Colorful

Examples include: **String, yarn, embroidery thread, fabric scraps, paper clips, nuts & bolts, light gauge wire** especially colored/coated.

**Specialty items**

Feathers, unique shells or beads, miscellaneous interestingly-shaped or -colored found objects.

# Keep it simple.

## USEFUL TOOLS

- Scissors, clothes pins, hole punch, tapestry needles
- Wire cutters, awl (2-3 per classroom)
- Hot glue guns (1-2 per classroom)

Remember all tools require training to be used properly and safely. For higher-risk tools, consider setting up one station that students rotate into as needed. See 'Studio Tips' handout.

## CAUTION

- Items that are heavy, bulky, or sharp.
- Glitter and items with glitter glued to them.
- Styrofoam (Especially large pieces that would have to be cut: very messy.)
- Waste - Example: large quantities of butcher or other paper that starts out 'new' but will be unusable and maybe unrecyclable after student use.
- Tape (Scotch, masking, duct) & glue.

### Why?

- Resourcefulness. Tape & glue can be easy fasteners, but what might students gain from figuring out how to attach materials in other ways?
- Waste. Items with a lot of tape or glue on them usually become unrecycleable and un reusable.
- Aesthetics. Tape, especially when showing on the surface of a sculpture, usually detracts from colors, textures, and other surface details.
- Functionality. White glue, glue sticks, rubber cement, scotch & masking tape do not function well for connecting 3D materials.

## TIPS

- Take Care of Yourself! When gathering materials, consider volume & weight. You will have to move and store these materials.
- Invite students to bring in specialty items, such as buttons, feathers, beads, shiny scraps...
- Storage - Having an assortment of bins & boxes is helpful for keeping materials sorted & organized. Ice cube trays are a great way to display and store small miscellaneous items. Having a cart, large table, and/or closet space is helpful for storing and moving materials.
- Cutting - Durable papers such as tagboard and some cardboard need to be cut with exacto knives or box-cutters. Students have to be trained, and you'll need cutting mats. Those materials work great if you're ready to take on the related challenges.
- Training students & appropriate tool use: Materials like wire requires having wire cutters. Students will have to be trained not to use scissors on wire, or it will destroy your scissors.
- Training students to maintain order & use tools & materials properly is a must. See Studio Tips handout.

What materials will inspire your students?