



# Clay Snails

Encourage the development of fine motor skills using clay to create snails that fit beautifully into a project on mini beasts.

## Materials

- Ordinary school clay/air-drying clay
- Clay board or suitable surface to roll on
- Small amount of water
- Pipe cleaners
- Tools to press into clay
- Ready mixed paint
- PVA glue

## Method

- Give each child a piece of clay about the size of an apple
- Model how to roll the clay out into a long sausage shape. Spread fingers wide and use the whole hand rolling backwards and forwards until the clay is a fairly even sausage shape approximately 2cm thick.
- Break off a piece of clay about 5cm long for the head of the snail. Put this aside for now.
- To make the shell and body, start to roll the sausage of clay up from one end making a coil. Keep rolling until the shell is big enough. Leave some of the clay sausage unrolled as their firms the tail end of the snail.
- Squeeze or pinch the tail to shape it into a point but avoid making it too skinny as it may snap off.
- Put a little water onto the piece of clay for the head - water acts like glue for clay. Flatten one end a bit and join the head to the main body. Press the head onto the body firmly to make sure that it attaches well.
- Choose tools to press into the snail shell to decorate it. Try using a sharpened pencil to make dots or use some film card to press lines into the shell.
- Cut some pipe cleaners to make 2 antennae for the snail. Push the end of each piece of pipe cleaner into the head and shape to the correct position. make sure the pipe cleaners are pushed well into the head so they don't fall out when the clay dries.
- Leave the clay to dry completely.
- The snails can be left plain or they can be painted. Mix PVA glue into ready mixed paint so that the paint wont flake when dry and it will give a shiny finish. This mix of paint and glue will also add strength to the clay snail.



## Taking it further

Make some leaves from another piece of clay by rolling it out flat and cutting out a leaf shape. Attach the snail to the leaf with water. Alternatively, make a leaf from strong green card and draw the veins on with crayons or pens. Sit the snail on the leaf when dry. Why not make flowers from tissue or crêpe paper and have the snails crawling about in a colourful garden?

## Experimenting

This activity can lead into or follow on from observation work on real snails. making links with real life helps deepen children's understanding.

