

Design Your Own Anasazi Pottery

For young budding anthropologists, this is the perfect creative project. In this activity, your child will study images of Anasazi pottery, then use what she's learned to create her own patterned pottery in the Anasazi style. *Anasazi* is Navajo for "Ancient Ones", and is the name given to the ancient people who lived in the present-day Four Corners region of the United States. This project is a great way to introduce your child to the art of ancient peoples and will help whet her curiosity about the diverse cultures of the world.

What You Need:

- Heavy duty white paper plate such as Chinette
- Scratch paper
- Pencil
- Sharpies or other markers in black, red, and brown



What You Do:

1. Do an Internet image search for "Anasazi pottery" to find several examples to share with your child. As you study the images with your child, discuss the designs and how the Anasazi craftsmen used lines and repetitive patterns. Also note that some designs are very complicated while others are much more simple, and that the lines often vary in width and smoothness.
2. Encourage your child to create her own design using elements of Anasazi art without replicating an actual Anasazi piece. For example, your child might choose to incorporate decorative bands, bold geometric patterns, a black, red, and brown color scheme, or a combination of all three into her design. Have your child make a rough sketch of her designs on scratch paper before working on the actual piece.
3. Have your child sketch her chosen design onto the paper plate in pencil. Once the design has been outlined, have your child fill it in with the markers. Ask your child to take breaks from coloring periodically to let the ink dry and prevent smearing.

Extension Idea: Look up several other styles of pottery such as Woodland, Chinese Ming, and Minoan. What inspiration does your child find in these designs? If she likes, your child can make more paper plate pottery, perhaps even creating an entire paper plate gallery!

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