

# Relief Sculpture Plaque Inspired by Vintage Postcard Designs

**Objective:** to create a relief sculpture using a single slab of clay as a background with additional flat layers of text and imagery and/or designs added on top.

A **relief sculpture** is a one-sided, almost flat sculpture with the features built up from the background surface. Once complete, this piece should be able to be propped onto a small display easel or hung onto a wall.

## Project Requirements:

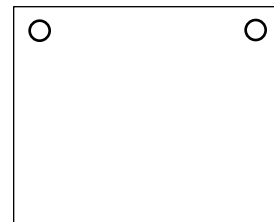
1. The plaque should be between 7 x 9 and approximately 9 x 11 inches
2. The plaque may be vertical or horizontal
3. There must be one slab for the background surface of the piece
4. There must be some form of relief that has been created by adding clay appliqués or pieces of clay to build up the surface from the backing slab
5. There must be lettering
6. There are areas of carving into the clay; the carving may be on the added clay, the appliqués, or carved into the base slab
7. If the piece is to be hung on a wall, it must have two holes in both top corners
8. The sculpture must be painted with least 5 colors (using underglazes)



## A Few Ideas inspired by Vintage Postcards:

You could base your design on a:

- **A City or Town**  
for example, Paris or New York (or Caldwell, NJ!)
- **A Country**  
Italy, Mexico, Japan, etc.
- **A Landmark or Famous Place**  
Niagara Falls, the Eiffel Tower, etc.



## STEPS to BEGIN:

1. **DESIGN:** See the separate design handout
2. **ROLL THE SLAB** that will be the base of your project. Use a ruler to measure and cut the sides so they are the correct size and straight.
3. **SCORE and SLIP** to assemble **ALL** elements onto the base slab. Use a paintbrush to clean up and smooth all attached elements
4. **THINK ABOUT THE SURFACE - MAKE IT SMOOTH or TEXTURED** depending on what is needed for your design; remember - there should be areas of carving.

## **Rubric for the Design: 25 total points**

- **0 to 6 points:** lettering has been traced and added to the design; the font is specific and has been carefully observed or traced or transferred to the design
- **0 to 12 points:** imagery, including at least 3 objects/details/landscape elements has been added to the design; multiple references have been used
- **0 to 7 points:** color has been neatly added with color pencil (image should be fully colored; -5 points for color that is only indicated with words or labels)

## **Construction of the Relief Plaque**

### **\_\_\_\_\_/25 points Involvement in Project / Respect for the Classroom and Materials:**

- Efficient use of class time; student is working on the project for the full class period (0 to 20 points)
- Complexity – project is not too simplified / student is creating to the best of their ability
- Tools are used properly, cleaned, and returned to storage containers; brushes and palettes are washed and returned to their proper storage spaces; work surfaces are cleaned at the end of class
- Slab roller is used properly
- Project is stored carefully and does not dry out before finished (- 5 points if project needs to be restarted)

### **\_\_\_\_\_/30 points Project-specific criteria:**

- The plaque is at least 7 x 9 inches (-5 to points if plaque is smaller than 7 x 9 inches prior to firing)
- One slab has been used for the background surface of the piece
- There is some form of relief created by adding clay appliqués or pieces of clay to build up the surface from the backing slab (-10 points if there are no areas of relief / added slabs)
- Lettering / text has been added (-10 points if there is not lettering/text)
- There are areas of carving into the clay; on the added clay, the appliqués, or carved into the base slab (-5 points if there is not carving and -5 points if no additional texture is added)
- There are two holes in both top corners, if needed

### **\_\_\_\_\_/20 points Craftsmanship and Application of Design Elements**

- The relief is carefully crafted, applied to the background slab, the design and/or text and imagery is carefully carved and sculpted
- The project is not cracked with chipped, loose areas (0 to 5 points)
- Tool-marks and fingerprints are removed before the project is fired in the kiln (0 to 5 points)
- Areas of scoring do not show along joined edges (0 to 5 points)
- Any areas of carving have been cleaned up and rough clay has been removed (0 to 5 points)

### **\_\_\_\_\_/10 points Creative Design**

- Interesting and/or unique textures and designs
- Successful solution to the assignment
- Effective use of text / lettering

## **Underglaze and Glazing 30 total points**

- Sculpture is painted with least 5 color of underglazes (0 to 5 points)
- The underglaze is carefully painted and opaque; no unintentionally thin areas of color (0 to 15 points)
- Effective selection of colors – appropriate to the design and the colors work together (0 to 10 points)