



Volume 144 | Gr. 4-8

Time: 2-3 class periods
(45-60 minutes each)

"Hoo" wants to try felting?

National Art Standards

VA:Cr1.1.4: Brainstorm multiple approaches to a creative art or design problem.

VA:Cr2.1.4: Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches.

VA:Cr3.1.4: Revise artwork in progress on the basis of insights gained through reflection.

VA:Re7.1.4: Compare responses to a work of art before and after working on similar projects.

Objectives

Students will...

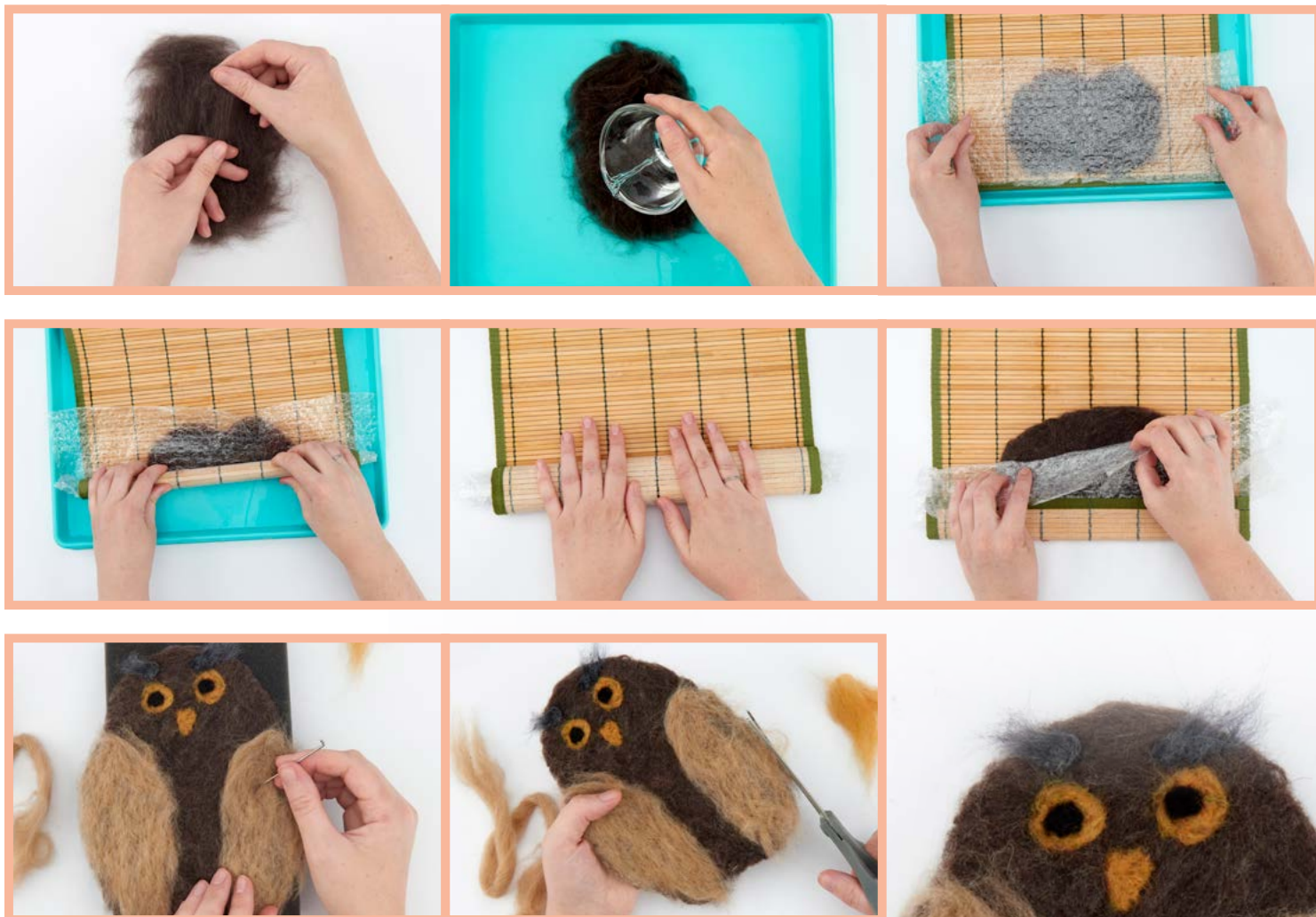
- Understand the process of wet felting
- Explore the use of texture and color in fiber art
- Develop fine motor skills and patience through the felting process
- Learn to translate visual ideas into a tactile, three-dimensional form

Day 1: Introduction to wet felting and design planning

1. Discuss what felting is and how wet felting works. Explain how wool fibers bond together with the application of warm water, soap, and agitation. Show examples of felted objects, focusing on animals or birds.
2. Introduce the project: creating a felt owl. Show images or sketches of owls, discussing the shapes, colors, and textures that will be used.
3. Give a demonstration of wet felting. Show students how to layer wool roving on bubble wrap or a bamboo mat. Demonstrate the process of adding soap and warm water, then gently rubbing the wool to start the felting process. Explain the importance of patience and consistent pressure during felting. The longer you felt, the denser the fabric will become.
4. If you will be adding details with needle felting, you can also demonstrate that process. Review the safety procedures students need to follow when working with sharp objects like felting needles. Explain how felting needles have barbs or notches that catch the wool fibers and push them together, creating felt.
5. For the remainder of the class period, have students sketch their owl design and decide on colors and shapes they want to use. Discuss how to break down the owl into basic shapes (e.g., body, wings, eyes, beak) to make the felting process easier.

Day 2: creating the felt owl

1. Have students prepare their workstations. To minimize mess, students can work in shallow trays and have towels or sponges on hand. They should have bubble wrap or a bamboo mat, wool roving, soap, and a bowl of warm water. If you will be needle felting, they will also need felting needles and foam pads.
2. Layer wool for the base of the owl.
 - Start with a piece of wool roving that's about the size and shape of the owl's body. Pull apart the wool fibers gently, then lay them out flat on the bubble wrap.
 - Lay the fibers in one direction first (e.g., horizontally), then add a second layer of wool on top, laying the fibers in the opposite direction (vertically). This cross-layering helps the wool fibers bond more effectively.
 - Repeat this process to create at least 3–4 layers, depending on the thickness desired for the owl's body. You can make sure that there aren't any gaps or thin areas by holding the owl up to the light.
3. Felt the base of the owl.
 - **Apply soap and water:** Pour a small amount of warm, soapy water over the wool. It should be wet but not soaking. You can dab up any excess water with a towel or sponge. Demonstrate how to use gentle, circular motions to start rubbing and shaping the wool into your desired shape. This friction, combined with the soap and water, will begin the felting process.
 - **Rolling and pressing:** After the wool is the shape you want, place another piece of bubble wrap or a bamboo mat on top of the wool. Roll the mat with the wool inside like a sushi roll. Roll it back and forth several times while pressing firmly to increase the friction. This helps the fibers lock together.
- **Check progress:** Unroll the mat and check the wool's texture. It should start to feel firmer. If it's still soft or loose, continue rolling or rubbing with your hands until the fibers are well bonded.
- **Reshaping:** Encourage students to shape the felt as they work. They can gently tug or press areas that need more definition. Remind them that they can trim any rough edges with scissors at the end.
 - o **Note:** Felting takes time. Consistent rubbing and rolling will result in a stronger, more durable felt. If a piece isn't felting as expected, students can add more wool, re-wet the area, or try a different felting technique.
4. Add details, rinse, and dry.
 - Once the body is felted, students can add smaller shapes for the wings, eyes, and beak. Show students how to felt these details separately and attach them to the body with additional rubbing and pressing or how to layer them directly on the main piece with needle felting.
 - Once all the features are securely felted, rinse the entire owl in clean water to remove soap residue. Pat the owl dry with a towel and leave it to dry completely. Drying can take several hours or overnight, depending on the thickness of the wool.



Day 3: Finishing touches and reflection

1. Give students 20 minutes to finish any remaining details on their owls. Use scissors to trim any uneven edges or add precise shaping.
2. As students finish, have them present their felt owls to the class, discussing their process and the choices they made with colors and shapes. Encourage peer feedback that focuses on positive elements and suggestions for future projects.
3. Create a classroom display of the finished felt owls or allow students to take their projects home.



Extension ideas:

- **Sewing:** Students can sew on small details like claws or embellishments with needle and thread after the felt owl is dry.
- **Research:** Students can research different owl species and create a felt owl based on a specific type.
- **Writing:** Have students write a short story or description about their owl, explaining its habitat and characteristics.
- **Cross-curricular connection:** Integrate a science lesson about owls and their role in the ecosystem, enhancing the art project with scientific knowledge.



Materials list

- Wool roving in various colors ([9732785A](#), [9732785B](#))
- Soap (mild liquid soap or olive oil soap)
- Warm water
- Plastic trays or shallow basins
- Bubble wrap or bamboo mat
- Small towels or sponges
- Scissors
- Felting needles for small details ([9732789](#))
- Foam needle felting pad ([9732782](#))
- Reference images of owls for inspiration

