

CARBONATURE CLASSROOM

**Grade 8-9 kids casting workshop.
Approx 15 minutes or less per face.**



Basic Carbonature Tutorial

Important: A Few Rules to Follow When Making Face or Body Molds, Including Carbonature Sculptures

Please follow these basic rules and only proceed if a competent adult is present.

- **Health and Safety:**

- Charcoal can be harmful to your health. Always wear appropriate dust masks when using it, including during collection or mixing with glue.
- Only use plaster gauze bandages (preferably medical grade) for mold making on human skin. Never use casting plaster directly on skin as it may burn the skin when setting.
- Use a mold release agent, such as Vaseline or a skin-safe barrier alternative such as Dermeze, so plaster does not stick to the skin. Avoid any plaster coming in contact with hair.
- Never block your model's access to breathing through their nose!
- Remember: The person you are taking a mold of is more important than the mold itself. Their comfort and safety should never be compromised.

Preparation is Key -

Materials and Tools Required:

- One or more medical or craft plaster gauze rolls.
- Scissors or a craft knife (preferably for children to use scissors as serious injuries could result from using a craft knife).
- Plastic cover for the table and floor, if necessary, to protect from plaster drips.

- Cardboard or a cutting surface if using a craft knife.
- Towel to place over the shoulders or a large plastic garbage bag with a hole cut in the bottom to place over the model's head (plastic bags are preferable as they are generally long enough to cover the model's clothing from plaster drips).
- Shower cap (not essential).
- Woven paper towels to clean the skin after the removal of the cast. The model's eyes will need to be wiped as they will be coated with the barrier ointment.
- Vaseline or a similar paraffin-based, skin-safe barrier protection. Dermeze is a skin treatment ointment similar to Vaseline but easier to wash off. Be aware and take care of individuals who may have skin conditions.
- Garbage container.
- Shredded paper, if available, to create a nest to place the curing plaster cast within after you have removed the mold from the model's face. The mold will be damp and can be flattened or warped if not treated with care. You can also wrap material in a circle to support the face with the nose down.
- Once the plaster has cured, it can be taken out of the nest or circular support.
- Water tray or large bowl for warm water to dip the plaster strips in.
- Water bucket to wash hands.



Preparation for Applying Plaster Strips:

- **Cutting the Strips:**
 - Cut two or more layers of plaster gauze at once to speed up this somewhat tedious task.
 - A square patch can be useful for placement over the eye, which is generally where we place the first plaster strip so the model can relax as their eye is covered.

- Thin strips should be cut to place down the bridge of the nose. These thin strips can also be placed around the nostrils to keep the model's airway open.
- Cut enough strips to finish the casting, which is about 1 meter or 1 yard of plaster, depending on the model's head size.

- **Preparation Steps:**

- Start by applying the skin barrier ointment (e.g., Vaseline or Dermeze) to the model's skin.



- Prepare the model with a large plastic rubbish (garbage) bag, a towel, or a large cloth to protect their clothing. Unlike casting plaster, the plaster in gauze strips easily washes out of cloth or clothing.

Preparation for Applying Plaster Strips:

1. Applying the Barrier Ointment:

- Allow the model to apply the barrier ointment to their face. This gives them the first level of participation and speeds up the procedure.
- Check that the ointment has completely covered the skin and that the coverage feels lubricated. Ensure that the eyebrows are fully covered.
- Apply ointment to the hair near the temples, as this can come in contact with the plaster.
- People generally tend to apply a very light or thin layer, but it must feel fully covered and generous, so check before casting.
- Tell the model to close their eyes, then dip your finger into the ointment and apply a good dollop to fully cover the eyelids and lashes just before you begin applying the plaster gauze.

2. Testing the Plaster Gauze:

- Before you start, test a piece of plaster gauze soaked with water on some skin or a table surface. Gently rub your finger over the gauze to activate the plaster. It should become creamy to the touch.
- If you see fine holes rather than a consistent white plaster, it means the gauze is either not mixed properly, of poor quality, or past its shelf life and unusable.

- There will be a few holes, but smoothing the gauze with your finger pushes the plaster down onto the skin, giving the casting a better imprint.

3. **Wetting and Applying the Gauze:**

- The best method of wetting and applying the gauze is by holding onto the corners of the strip so that it remains flat when dunking it in the water and applying it to the skin. If you only hold one edge, it may collapse into itself, making it difficult and time-consuming to flatten out again.
- You can feel comfortable with your smoothing if the plaster becomes a creamy consistency.

Starting the Casting Process:

1. **Begin at the Eyes:**

- Start your casting at the eyes; this allows the model to relax.
- The eyes are the most difficult area because the plaster bandage tends to pull away from the tear duct recess area, as you pull your finger away. Make sure the bandage is fully against the skin, or it can leave a large air bubble in your cast mold. Take your time in this crucial area.
- Be gentle and considerate, imagining someone doing this to your eye. The more smoothing that is done, the better the imprint will be. However, time is of the essence, so you must balance thoroughness with efficiency.



2. **Casting the Eyes:**

- **Step 1:** Have two special pieces cut, one for each eye, and apply them.
- **Step 2:** Use your strips to create a V shape over each eye, followed by another strip directly over both eyes, as pictured. Both methods work equally well, creating a strong start to the eye region, allowing you to move on.

3. **Applying the Plaster Gauze:**

- The plaster material sets quickly, so continue to apply new material on wet plaster. If the plaster sets, the next piece you place beside it could

form a line between the two areas. Therefore, a constant application of gauze is very important.



Attention to Detail:

•Nose Application:

- The nose requires special attention when applying the bandage to the nostril.
- Massage the bottom of the nostril into place so its distinctive form is captured.
- We have chosen to leave

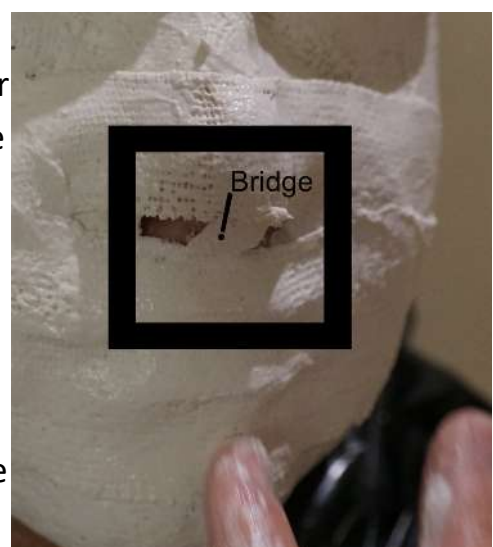
applying the bandage to the bridge of the nose until last in this photo; you can choose to place it when the area is covered.

- One reason for this approach is to allow the model to breathe freely during the main procedure of making the cast.
- Another reason is to allow a layer of bandage to surround the nose, enabling our small strip for the bridge of the nose to adhere better.
- The bridge requires no further application and is finished. Use small pieces to cover the nostrils for better detail and finishing of the nose.



- Best practice is to fold your small strip together as you place it down the bridge of the nose.

- Apply another folded strip immediately after the first; this means you now have four layers of bandage over the bridge for strength.





- The finished mask on the left was done by a 12 year old.

This was their first mask.

- Photo on the right is the removal of the mask.



- The caster acts like an anchor for the model



Removing the Face Mask:

- **DO NOT PULL THE MASK OFF!**

- The plaster bandage sets quickly, typically within about 3-4 minutes and cures within 10 minutes.
- The person casting holds the back edges of the mask with both hands.
- Ask the model to start flexing their facial muscles slowly.
- Instruct the model to wrinkle

their forehead, inflate their cheeks, squeeze their eyes, and move their chin slowly.

- The model will feel the mask starting to separate from their skin.
- At this stage, the model should extract themselves and start to pull their face away from the plaster mold slowly, at their own pace.
- The caster anchors the mold at the back edge while the model continues to flex their facial muscles and pull back slowly. The caster does not pull the mask off the model.
- The model pulls their face away from the mask which is being gripped by the caster and again 'in their own time'.

- Remember to have the nest ready for your face mask to be placed within. The mask will be wet and must be treated with care.
- If you do not have shredded paper or cloth to create a nest or ring, place the finished cast on its back edge.
- Depending on room temperature, it will take 3-4 hours to cure. A hair dryer or heat gun can be used to speed up the drying time.

Preparing the Nest:

- The nest is crucial for protecting the face shape and preventing flattening of the nose.
- If using cloth, wrap it in a circle with the internal area about the size of the casting.
- Place the mask face down into the ring and push the cloth to enclose around the base of the head, elevating it from the tabletop.
- The best method we have found is shredded paper lined with food wrap to keep the paper dry and clean. This provides a soft yet firm backing to suspend the mask, particularly useful when filling it with charcoal.



-Important Notes:

- **Name Identification:**
 - Always write the name of the model on the mask as it's drying.
- **Recognising Finished Castings:**
 - The finished casting may be difficult to recognise, especially in a large group of people. So naming is important.

- **Curing Time:**
 - Allow the plaster mask to cure for at least 30 minutes before placing casting material inside.
- **Nest Building:**
 - Always build a nest around the mold to protect the nose from flattening and to retain the shape of the face.

- Have fun, it's easy.



Carbonature, Kim Perrier ©