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# Lesson Plan: From Blob to Bloom - Introduction to 3D Gel Nail Art

## Materials Needed:

- UV/LED Nail Lamp (minimum 48W recommended)
- Practice Nail Tips on a Stand
- Silicone Practice Mat or Palette
- 3D Hard Gel or Sculpture Gel (in a pot, not a bottle; clear or a color of choice)
- Gel Base Coat and Top Coat
- Gel Color Polish (for the base of the nail tip)
- 3D Nail Art Brush (a small, pointed brush is ideal) or a dotting tool
- Isopropyl Alcohol (90% or higher) and Lint-Free Wipes
- Small Dappen Dish (for alcohol)
- Optional: Small rhinestones, chrome powder, or glitter for embellishment
- A phone or tablet for inspiration research and documentation
- Good ventilation in your workspace

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## 1. Learning Objectives (The "What We'll Accomplish")

By the end of this 90-minute lesson, you will be able to:

- Correctly manipulate 3D hard gel to create three fundamental shapes (sphere, teardrop, petal) with smooth surfaces.
- Assemble basic shapes into a cohesive, simple 3D design on a nail tip.
- Demonstrate the proper technique for curing 3D gel art to ensure durability.
- Design and execute a unique 3D nail art creation based on a personal inspiration piece.

## 2. The Hook: Inspiration Dive (10 minutes)

Let's start by exploring what's possible! This part is about getting your creative energy flowing.

- **Activity:** Spend 5-7 minutes browsing online platforms like Pinterest or Instagram for "3D gel nails," "sculpture gel art," or "3D nails" (Japanese 3D nails).
- **Task:** Find 2-3 designs that you find fascinating. Don't just look at nails! Look at textures in nature (a seashell), architecture (a decorative pillar), or even candy.
- **Discussion Point:** What do you notice about how the artists built these shapes? Do you see simple forms like dots and petals combining to make something complex? This is the core skill we are learning today.

## 3. Instructional Strategy: The "I Do, You Do" Method

### Part A: Mastering the Material - Guided Demo & Practice (25 minutes)

3D gel has a clay-like texture that is very different from regular gel polish. We will learn to control it on a flat surface before moving to a curved nail.

1. **Prep Your Workspace:**
  - Pour a small amount of isopropyl alcohol into your dappen dish.
  - Have your silicone mat, 3D gel, and art brush ready.
2. **The Scoop:** I'll explain, then you'll do it. Use your brush to scoop a tiny, seed-sized bead of 3D gel. The key is to get a clean scoop without introducing air bubbles.
3. **The Placement:** Place the bead onto your silicone mat.
4. **Shape Drills (You Do):** Now it's your turn to practice. Your brush should be slightly damp with alcohol—this stops the gel from sticking to the brush, allowing you to sculpt it. If the brush is too wet, it will dissolve the gel.
  - **The Sphere:** Gently tap and roll the bead of gel with the side of your brush until it forms a smooth, round ball. Don't flatten it! Create at least 5 spheres.
  - **The Teardrop:** Create a sphere, then gently pull one side with the tip of your brush to create a point. Create 5 teardrops.
  - **The Petal:** Create a teardrop, then use the flat side of your brush to gently press down and flatten it, creating a petal shape. Create 5 petals.
5. **Flash Cure:** After creating a shape you're happy with, place the mat under the lamp for 10-15 seconds. This is a "flash cure"—it freezes the shape in place so you can add more around it without smushing your work.

## Part B: The Main Event - Freestyle Sculpture Challenge (40 minutes)

This is where you bring your inspiration to life. You're not aiming for a perfect copy, but a design inspired by the textures or shapes you found earlier.

1. **Prep Your Canvas:** Take one practice nail tip. Apply a base coat, two coats of your chosen gel color, and a top coat. Cure each layer fully according to your lamp's instructions. This will be the background for your art.
2. **Design & Build:**
  - Using the techniques from your shape drills, begin building your design directly on the nail tip.
  - Work in small sections. Place a bead of gel, shape it, and **flash cure for 10 seconds**. This is the most important step for building height and dimension.
  - **Example Idea:** To create a simple flower, place 5 "petal" shapes in a circle. Flash cure. Then, place a "sphere" in the middle. Add a rhinestone if you wish.
3. **Final Cure:** Once your entire 3D design is complete, do a full 60-second cure to ensure it is rock solid.
4. **Finishing Touch:** You can leave the art with its natural finish or apply a thin layer of top coat over the entire nail and cure one last time. This adds shine and seals everything in.

## 4. Differentiation and Support

- **Feeling Stuck? (Support):** If the gel is too sticky, your brush may be too dry. If it's melting, your brush is too wet. Find that happy medium. Start with a very simple design, like three spheres in a row (a "bubble" design).
- **Feeling Confident? (Challenge):** Try layering your shapes. Can you place a smaller petal on top of a larger one? Can you mix a tiny bit of chrome powder into clear gel before sculpting to create a metallic effect? Try creating a leaf shape by flattening a teardrop and using the tip of your brush to etch a vein down the middle before curing.

## 5. Assessment and Reflection (15 minutes)

Art isn't just about the final product; it's about the process. Let's reflect on what you created and

learned.

- **Portfolio Snap:** Take a well-lit photo of your practice shapes on the mat and your final nail design. This is the beginning of your nail art portfolio!
- **Self-Assessment (Artist's Statement):** Answer these three questions about your work today.
  1. What part of the process felt the most natural or enjoyable to you?
  2. What was the biggest challenge, and how did you problem-solve it? (e.g., "My petals kept getting too flat, so I learned to use a lighter touch with the brush.")
  3. Looking at your inspiration photo and your final nail, what element are you most proud of capturing in your design?

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