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# Cosplay Creator's Workshop: The Prop Design Challenge

## Materials Needed:

- **Brainstorming & Design Tools:**
  - Paper or a sketchbook
  - Pencils, colored pencils, or markers
  - Access to the internet (with supervision) or books/comics for character research
- **Core Building Materials (Choose what you have!):**
  - Cardboard (from cereal boxes, shipping boxes, etc.)
  - Craft foam sheets or foam board
  - Empty plastic bottles or containers
  - Felt or fabric scraps
  - Aluminum foil
- **Joining & Assembly Tools:**
  - Scissors (and crafting knife, with adult help)
  - Hot glue gun (with adult supervision) or strong craft glue/tape
  - Masking tape or painter's tape
- **Detailing & Finishing Supplies:**
  - Acrylic paint and paintbrushes
  - Markers (like Sharpies)
  - Optional: String, yarn, beads, buttons, bottle caps, or other fun "found objects" for details.

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## Lesson Plan Details

### 1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Hania will be able to:

- **Analyze** a character's design to identify a key prop or accessory.
- **Design** a plan for her prop, considering shape, color, and materials.
- **Construct** a 3D prop using everyday household materials and problem-solving skills.
- **Present** her creation and explain her design choices.

### 2. Curriculum Connections

- **Art & Design:** Principles of 3D sculpture, color theory, and turning a 2D drawing into a 3D object.
- **English Language Arts:** Character analysis, storytelling through objects, and oral presentation skills.
- **STEM (Engineering & Math):** Using the design process (imagine, plan, create, improve), basic measurement/estimation, and understanding structural stability.

### 3. Introduction: The Character Deep Dive (15 minutes)

The goal here is to choose a character and think like a designer. This isn't just about what looks cool, but what tells the character's story.

1. **Choose Your Champion:** "Hania, today you are a professional cosplay designer! Your first client is... you! Pick one favorite character you'd love to bring to life. Who will it be?"
2. **Become an Investigator:** Once she chooses, find a few good pictures of the character. Ask guiding questions to get her thinking:
  - "What is one object this character always has with them? Is it a wand, a shield, a special necklace, a high-tech gadget?"
  - "Why is that object important to them? Does it give them power? Is it a special gift? Does it help them do their job?"
  - "Let's look closely at the details. What shapes do you see? What colors? Does it look heavy or light? Old or new?"
3. **Select the Prop:** Based on the discussion, help Hania choose ONE prop or accessory to create today. Choosing one item makes the project achievable and fun, not overwhelming.

#### 4. Activity Part 1: The Blueprint (20 minutes)

Professional designers always start with a plan. This is where we turn ideas into a guide for building.

1. **Sketch It Out:** On a piece of paper, ask Hania to draw her prop. Encourage her to draw it from a few angles if she can (front, side). This doesn't have to be perfect! It's about getting the idea down.
2. **Label Your Materials:** Now, let's think like an engineer. Ask her to label her drawing with the materials she plans to use. "Which part will be cardboard? Where could you use that plastic bottle? How will you make the handle comfortable to hold?"
3. **Gather Your Supplies:** Using the blueprint, gather all the materials from the list that she will need for the project. Set up a dedicated "Creation Station" workspace.

#### 5. Activity Part 2: The Creation Station (45-60 minutes)

This is the hands-on building phase! Let creativity lead the way. Your role is to be the "assistant" and safety supervisor, especially with scissors or hot glue.

1. **Build the Base:** Start by building the main shape of the prop using the core materials like cardboard or plastic bottles. Help her cut out the basic shapes and tape or glue them together. Encourage problem-solving: "The handle seems a little wobbly. What could we add to make it stronger?"
2. **Add Dimension and Details:** Use other materials like craft foam, foil, or fabric scraps to add layers and details. This is what makes a prop look realistic and interesting. For example, thin strips of craft foam can look like metal bands, or crumpled foil can create a rocky texture.
3. **Paint and Finish:** Once the construction is complete and the glue is dry, it's time to paint! Start with a base coat of color. Once that's dry, she can add smaller details, shadows, or highlights with other colors or markers. Remind her to look back at her research photos.

#### 6. Conclusion: Character Showcase & Reflection (10 minutes)

This is the celebration of her hard work and creativity!

1. **The Showcase:** Ask Hania to present her finished prop. Encourage her to hold it as the character would. You can even take a few photos of her in action!
2. **Designer's Debrief:** Ask a few reflection questions:
  - "What was your favorite part of making this?"
  - "What was the trickiest part, and how did you figure it out?"
  - "If you were to make it again, is there anything you would do differently?"

#### 7. Differentiation & Extension Ideas

- **For a Simpler Project:** Choose a prop with very simple shapes (e.g., a magic wand, a simple

shield, a medallion). Focus more on the painting and decorating than complex construction.

- **For an Advanced Challenge:** Encourage Hania to add a moving part or a light-up element (using a simple LED or tea light). She could also try "weathering" techniques—using brown or black paint lightly brushed on to make the prop look old and used.
- **Extension:** This single prop can be the first piece of a larger cosplay project that she can add to over time!

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