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All About Clay

From clay rock to clay pot!



Lesson Outline

- What is clay?
- The process of working with clay
- Your turn! Activities

Do you have any clay pots in your home?

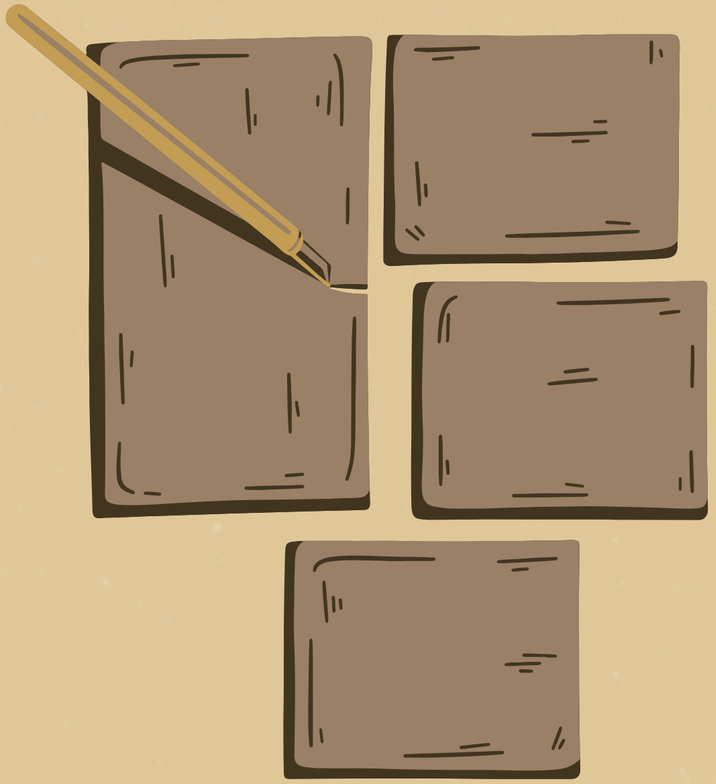
Clay or ceramic pieces can be found in many different places in the home. From your kitchen bowls to your garden pots, clay is a versatile and popular material.



Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Identify what clay is
- Outline the clay-making process



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What is clay?

Clay is a natural material made out of water and rock particles.

Three points to remember:

1. It's soft when wet.
2. It becomes hard and solid when it dries.
3. It's used to make pottery, sculptures and other artworks.





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The Clay Process

To transform raw clay to a finished ceramic item, there are a few steps:

1. Planning what you are going to make

- Draw pictures and research inspirational ceramic artists and artworks.

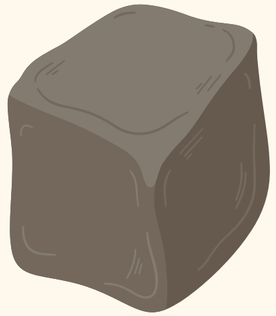


2. Cutting out the clay you need





3. Wedging or kneading the clay.



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No Air Bubbles!

This is very important!

When the clay is fired in a kiln, air trapped inside the clay can expand and cause the piece to crack.

By removing air bubbles through **wedging**, the clay will be more solid. **Wedging** is similar to kneading dough!

Watch the video to see how to wedge.



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Back to the Clay Process

4. Sculpting

- Now that the air bubbles are wedged away, start your clay creation with various clay tools.



Fun Facts: There are many different ways to sculpt clay. Some of the most common hand-building techniques are:

1. Pinching (pinch pots)
2. Slab building
3. Coiling







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Back to the Clay Process

5. Drying

- After you sculpt your clay, you need to let it dry until it becomes bone dry (no moisture present).



Facts: The drying process takes around **1 week** depending on how large your clay work is and the weather.

1. Hot weather - clay dries out quicker because of the hot and dry air.
2. Cold weather - clay dries out slower because of the damp and cold moisture in the air.

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6. Bisque Firing

- After the clay is dried, it is fired in a clay oven called a **kiln**.
- Bisque firings can be up to **1832 Fahrenheit**.
- When the clay comes out it is called **bisqueware**.



7. Glazing

- After your work is **bisque-fired**, decorations and colour can be added.
- **Glaze** is like paint but for clay



8. Glaze Firing

- When you finish painting the glaze your clay goes back into the **kiln** again!
- This is to set the glaze in place.
- Glaze firings can be up to **2192 to 2372 Fahrenheit**.



You're done. Enjoy your clay creation!

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Recap!

What is clay?

Clay is a natural material that is made up of rock particles.

No air bubbles!

Wedge clay on a flat surface to remove air bubbles.

Three points to remember

- It's soft when wet
- It becomes hard and solid when it dries
- It's used to make pottery, sculptures and other artworks.

Transforming Clay

1. Planning
2. Cutting out the clay
3. Wedging
4. Sculpting
5. Drying
6. Bisque Firing
7. Glazing
8. Glaze Firing