

Basic Clay Methods

There are three common methods to creating basic constructions:

Pinch

- To make a **pinch pot**, make a small ball of clay the size of a tennis ball or less, and stick your thumb in the center, making a hole.
- Then apply gentle pressure with your fingers on the outside and thumb on the inside, creating a rounded bowl shape.
- You can easily join two of these shapes together (scratch and attach) to create a spherical form that could be the body or head of an animal figurine, bird house, etc.
- To make a rattle, wrap clay beads in tissue and put them inside before attaching two pinch pots.

Coil : Creating a **coil pot** or **coil structure** is repetitious, slow and tedious, but the results can be extremely pleasing and original.

- Create a coil by carefully rolling a lump of clay with all 8 fingers so that it is a nice and even thickness.
- Coil it upon itself to create the bottom of the pot. (or roll slab for base)
- Make another coil of the same thickness and attach it to the end of the first coil, carefully smoothing them together.
- Finish the bottom of the pot if necessary, then allow the coils to go on top of one another. The closer in you go, the more the pot will taper in.
- Putting the coils more towards the outside will make the pot expand outwards.
- You can create some interesting effects by making the coils go in and out in this manner.
- If you desire a smooth look, you can smooth the coils as you go.
- You could choose to smooth just the inside and leave the coil appearance on the outside.

Slab : A slab is made by rolling the clay with a rolling pin to an even thickness.

- It works best to have **guides** of the same thickness that the clay is to be.
- The rolling pin rolls over the guides with the clay in between and keeps all the clay the same thickness, preventing you from pushing too hard with the rolling pin.
- If the clay is sticking to the rolling pin, the clay is too moist. If it is cracking, it's too dry. Add water with your hands and wedge the clay.
- Work it into a piece of canvas to get some of the moisture out.
- Also make sure that no clay has accumulated on the rolling pin before you begin, Your clay slab will stick to these pieces.
- When constructing slabs, it is best to have them slightly dry because moist slabs will not hold up and will wobble and droop.
- It is also best to join clay that is the same consistency to prevent warping and cracking as they dry at different rates.
- When joining slabs, slip and score the surfaces of the pieces to be joined.
- This means to make some scratches in them to roughen them up, making the surfaces stick together more readily.

- Once the main body of the slab structure is assembled, it can be paddled, shaped, cut into, twisted, or otherwise formed into the final concept.
- Other appendages, handles, spouts, decorative clay forms, wads of clay, coils, decorations and textures can then be added (scratch and attach) if desired.

Creating textures

- Certain textures are best applied when the clay is in the soft, plastic state.
- For example, you can pinch or "flute" the edges of a piece.
- You could also pinch small parts outward over a large area to create a scaly appearance.
- Impressed designs can be made by pressing textured objects into the clay.
- Objects such as pencil erasers, forks, shells, bottle caps, fabrics, etc. can be used to create interesting textures and patterns.
- The texture should be applied when the clay is soft enough to take an imprint, yet not so soft as to stick to the texturing device.
- Other interesting textures can be created by carving into leather-hard clay.
- It is important that the clay has dried partially and is no longer pliable. This way, you can make deep cuts and even holes in the surface that won't affect the stability of the piece.
- You can use a paperclip loop to scoop out clay and make unique textures.

Firing

- The clay must dry for several days before firing in the kiln.
- If it is too moist, it will explode.
- The kiln heats the clay pieces to a temperature of about 1900 degrees Fahrenheit.
- This makes the clay durable and fuses small appendages to the main construction more permanently. Because the molecules of clay will become more compacted, your final project will be about 90% of the size it was before it went in.
- You will now be able to touch small pieces and use handles without worry of damage.

Glazing

- If you want your clay piece to be protected from water, you will want to apply a glaze.
- This is a mixture that contains small pieces of glass that when heated, the glass crystals to melt and fuse together, forming a glassy coating.
- Any depressions in the clay from the textures you created will have a deeper color because the molten glass will settle in these areas.
- You will paint 2-3 coats of it on your piece and then it will be fired again.
- The color of the glaze is rarely the color it will be once it is fired.
- Make sure not to paint any glaze on the bottom of your piece or you risk having it stick to the kiln shelf. The only way of removal from the kiln shelf is destroying the piece.

Art 9 Clay Coil/Pinch Pot Rubric

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Craftsmanship	Excellent craftsmanship. The pinch pot with added coils is polished and finished looking. Clay is even, there are no cracks, and is in the shape of a pot.	Good craftsmanship. There may be a few places that you could polish the pinch pot with coils, but overall well done.	Okay craftsmanship with the pinch pot. It seems a little rushed. Some details need to be added such as the coils.	Poor craftsmanship with the pinch pot. Much more attention to details such as the coils need to be added to complete the pot.
Technical Use of Medium (attaching your clay together) CP9.11	Employs chosen media very skillfully and effectively. The student constructed a functional and decorative pot using the pinch pot method. They also added coils using excellent slip and score technique.	Employs chosen media skillfully and effectively. The student constructed a pinch pot using good slip and score technique to attach the coils in a decorative manner.	Some care has been taken to learn and develop the use of media. While the student slipped and scored well in some areas with the coils, many areas need further attention and the construction is poor quality in several places.	The student connected the clay coils without using slip and score technique with little or no care to learn and develop the use of media.
Personal Identifier CP9.10	An excellent amount of attention was paid in including impressions in the clay that identify an aspect of the student or their life with a single word and imprints of a symbol or picture.	A good amount of attention was paid in including an impression in the clay that identifies the student's life with a word or symbol or both.	Some attention was paid in including impressions such as a word or symbol in the clay that identify aspects of the student's life.	Little or no attention was paid in including the impressions of a word or symbol in the clay that identify aspects of the student's life.
Take risks by working with Glazing using innovative ideas, unfamiliar styles, or media. CP9.12	Piece was glazed expertly with 2 layers. The piece looks well done and obvious effort was put in to make an aesthetically pleasing piece of artwork.	Piece was glazed well. The piece was glazed with at least one layer, the colours match the design, and the pot looks like a nice piece of artwork.	Piece was glazed with mixed varieties of glaze, little care was put into detail, and the paint work is somewhat sloppy.	The piece was not glazed, fired or finished.