

Ceramic Terms to Know

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Handbuilding	This term refers to the one of several techniques of building pots using the only the hands and simple tools rather than the potters wheel. The term used for creating pottery using the potter's wheel is "throwing".
Pinch	"Pinch" in ceramics is a method of shaping clay by inserting the thumb of one hand into the clay and lightly pinching with the thumb and fingers while slowly rotating the ball in the palm of the other hand. [See resources page for links to tutorials on how to create. See the Assignment 2 page for examples of pinch pots.] Pots made in this manner are called "pinch pots".
Coil	This is the technique of building ceramic forms by rolling out coils, or ropes, of clay and joining them together with the fingers or a tool.
Molding	In this technique, flat slabs of clay are pressed into molds in order to create various shapes or forms.
Slip	Slip is liquid clay. The easiest way to make slip is to gradually sift or spoon dry, powder clay into a small cup of water. Stir well as you add because it will tend to thicken up after it sits for a minute or two. You want it to be about the consistency of thick cream.
Score and Slip	Score and slip refers to a method of joining two pieces of clay together. First, score the clay; this means that you make scratches in the surfaces that will be sticking together. Then you slip it; that is you wet the surface with some slip, using it like glue. Next, you press the two pieces together. It is very important to always score and slip clay that is leather hard. If you do not, the pieces will likely pop apart when they are fired.
Stages of Dryness	<p>When speaking of clay, we refer to three basic stages of dryness: wet, leather hard and bone dry. They are self-explanatory, but descriptions of each are:</p> <p>Wet: Clay that is currently being worked with and has not had time to dry out.</p> <p>Leather Hard: Clay that is dry enough to work without bending when you carefully pick it up, but still has enough moisture in it to easily cut and join together using appropriate techniques. Clay is carved best at this stage of dryness also.</p>

	Bone Dry: Completely dry, unfired clay.
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Decorative Techniques and Terms

Sgraffito	Sgraffito is a decorating technique developed centuries ago. In its simplest embodiment, leather-hard clay is coated with an engobe or slip of contrasting color and then a pattern or picture is added by carving through or scraping off the slip to reveal the clay underneath.
Wax Resist	In this decorative technique, patterns or designs are created by brushing a wax medium over an area of clay, slip, or glaze to resist the final glaze application when the wax is dry.
Slip Trailing	<i>Slip trailing</i> is another decoration method. Slip (a liquid clay) is applied to the clay through a tube or nozzle, much like icing a cake.
Stamping	This is the technique of pressing forms into the clay to get decorative effects.
Majolica	<p>Below is the definition from encyclopedia.com</p> <p>(mejol'ike, mejol'-)or maiolica [from Majorca], type of faience usually associated with wares produced in Spain, Italy, and Mexico. The process of making majolica consists of first firing a piece of earthenware, then applying a tin enamel that upon drying forms a white opaque porous surface. A design is then painted on and a transparent glaze applied. Finally the piece is fired again. This type of ware was produced in the ancient Middle East by the Babylonians, and the method remained continuously in use. It was extensively employed by the Hispano-Moresque potters of the 14th cent. By the mid-15th cent. majolica was popular in Italy, where it became justly famous through the decorations of the Della Robbia family. The method is still widely used in folk art.</p> <p>Bibliography: See G. Liverani, <i>Five Centuries of Italian Majolica</i> (tr. 1960); M. Barnes and R. May, <i>Mexican Majolica in Northern New Spain</i> (1980).</p> <p>http://www.italianmajolica.com/majolica/making.html</p>
Mille Fiore	This refers to a method of creating designs by folding different colored clays together into "rods" or bars, then slicing them as if you were slicing rolled cookies. This duplicates a design over and over for each slice.

Firing Processes and Terms Dealing with Firing

Firing	This is the process of heating the pottery to a specific temperature in order to bring about a particular change in the clay or the surface.
Bisque	The term <i>bisque</i> refers to ceramic ware that has been fired once without glaze.
Greenware	This refers to ceramic ware that has not been fired.
Glaze	A glass-like surface coating for ceramics that is used to decorate and seal the pores of the fired clay.
Reduction	A kiln firing in which there is insufficient oxygen to consume the free carbon emanating from the heated glaze and clay, resulting in the formation of carbon monoxide. Oxygen-starved carbon monoxide pulls oxygen from the clay body and glaze, forming color changes in the coloring oxides.
Oxidation	A kiln firing with a full supply of oxygen (as opposed to a reduction firing). Electric kilns are this type.
Raku	Raku is a method of firing pottery that takes a ceramic piece in its raw state, greenware, and quickly (in 45 minutes to an hour rather than 8 to 18 hours) takes the temperature up to almost 2000 degrees.

Parts of a Pot

Note: The parts of a vase correspond to the parts of a human body. Check it out here: [http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Test/Pottery Public/script/parts.htm](http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Test/Pottery%20Public/script/parts.htm)

Mouth	The opening at the top of a vase.
Neck	The (usually) narrower part that leads from the body of the vase to the mouth.
Body	This is the main part of the vase. It is usually the largest part.
Foot	This is the part of the vase that meets the floor.

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