

Pottery Making: The Coil Method

Competency Goals

Grade 3: Social Studies Goals 5, 6
Language Arts Goals 1, 2, 3
Visual Arts Goals 1, 2, 3, 5

Grade 4: Social Studies Goals 2, 5, 7
Language Arts Goals 1, 2, 3
Visual Arts Goals 2, 3, 5

Grade 5: Social Studies Goal 3
Language Arts Goals 1, 2, 3
Visual Arts Goals 2, 3, 5

Objective

Students will explore how Native American potters created their pottery

Materials

Clay
Damp cloth
Rolling Pin

Procedure

1. Introduce the lesson by discussing the history of Native American pottery in what is now North Carolina. Native Americans often used the coil method to produce their pottery. The coil method involves rolling clay into long pieces, then laying the pieces in a circle on top of each other to make basic pottery form.
2. Making the coils:
 - a. Squeeze a lump of clay into a smooth, even “rope,” or coil, about seven inches long.
 - b. Place your hands in the center of the coil, moving them out as you roll the clay.
 - c. Roll several coils, join the two ends of each to form circles, then put them aside and cover with a damp cloth.
3. Making the base:
 - a. Flatten a lump of clay into an evenly thick slab, using a rolling pin or your hands.
 - b. Cut out a round piece from the flattened slab.
4. Attaching the coils:

- a. Attach the first coil onto the base by putting your thumb on the inside of the coil and pulling the clay into the base.
 - b. Attach additional coils using your thumb on the inside and other fingers on the outside; gently push each coil into the clay below it.
5. Finishing the surface:
- a. Carefully smooth the outside and inside of the pot with wet hands or a wet sponge so that you don't see the coils anymore.
 - b. Decorate your pot while it is still wet. You can add shapes or make indentations.

Everyday items that can be used to make indentations or to give texture are:

Netting	Clothespins
Spool of thread	Top of pen
Thumb	Rubber Band
Fork	Stone

6. Drying the pot:
- a. Trim away excess clay from the base.
 - b. Set your pot in a safe, dry spot so that it can thoroughly dry.