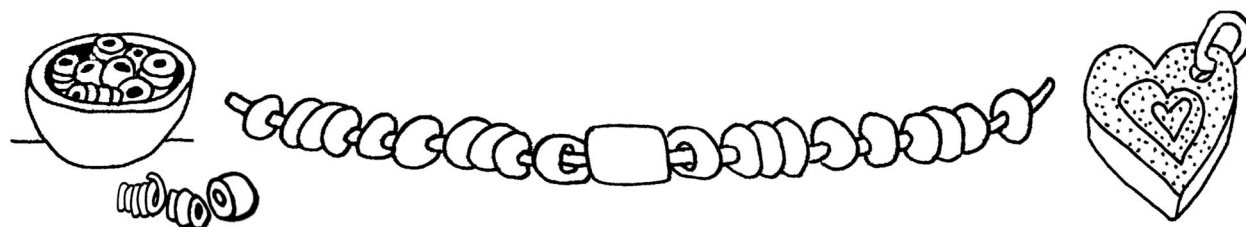
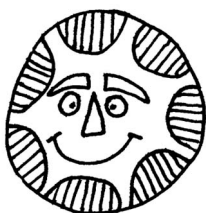


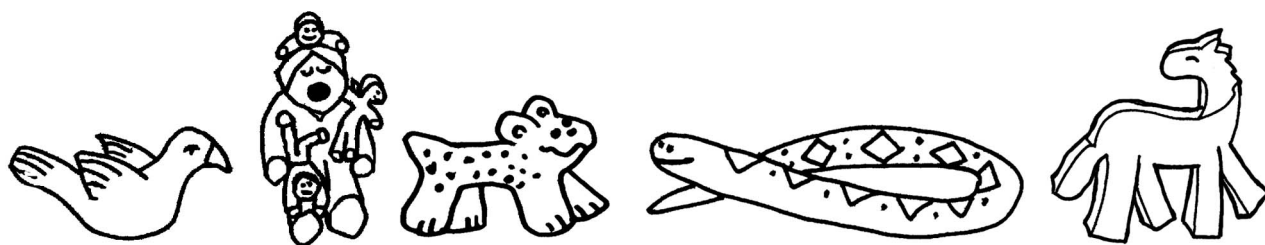
Clay Creations



**This book includes easy to learn techniques
with visual instructions.**



**This book is written
in first person to encourage
the language of responsibility.**



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The Process: Raw Clay to Finished Product – Teacher Tips



This lump of clay was brought in from the playground by a student. It is a great example of clay before it has been conditioned, the impurities taken out. Here in Houston, Texas, where I taught, the ground is mainly composed of what it called gumbo. It is a form of clay. It expands when wet, and shrinks when it dries. These bags of clay weight 50 pounds each, impurities have been removed.



This pile of broken bisque fired clay I saved from year to year to pour out of a bag to make a point. I wanted students to understand what a work of overworked clay looks like after it blows up in a kiln, and how it can blow up other work around it as well. It was too much of a temptation for students who were new to clay, and not satisfied with their initial product to smash it up and start over instead of shaping, smoothing and working with what they had already made. The option of not firing is brought up later.



Another essential for clay instruction is to have plenty of examples on hand. I saved examples from each stage of the process for each lesson including examples of how to make lesson simpler or to make it more challenging. I kept examples in labeled shoe boxes. They were organized by subject and level of difficulty (grade level). When I taught, I found skill to be more an indication of exposure and practice, and much less to do with grade level.



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The Process: Raw Clay to Finished Product – Teacher Tips



These photos are examples of some of the items I saved in those labeled shoe boxes.



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The Process: Raw Clay to Finished Product – Teacher Tips



This cart held everything I needed to teach clay; tools, boards, plastic bags, clay, and containers to collect work in. The cart was left set up and ready to roll out into the room with little effort. Simple clay "tools" (plastic utensils, and dried out ink pens) can be put in containers for easy distribution.



This rolling table was invaluable for younger students, like Kindergarten and some 1st grade classes (depending on skill level and self-control). Four to eight students can be called up at a time to work under closer supervision. The rest of the students work on artwork at their seats. I would choose an art related assignment that didn't require quite as much assistance. There are many skills that need repeated practice that can be done more independently.

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The Process: Raw Clay to Finished Product – Teacher Tips



This is a teacher sampler. Before starting clay each year with my students, I practiced myself so I could remember the pitfalls to avoid, and all the things that would be helpful to teach in order for my students to have a successful outcome.

Most of the time, I also had each group practice in modeling (practice) clay what they were going to make in regular clay. That would give me a chance to get around the whole room to make sure everyone understood the techniques being taught. The following class we would work with the regular clay. Practice makes better.



These photos are of the shelves in the Kiln "clay" room. I chose to do clay with all grade levels at the same time, so you can see the shelves are labeled by grade level. Students wanting their work fired, had to carve their name and team into the bottom of their work in a legible manner. At the end of each class, I checked and collected the work then put it on the shelves to dry.

I did not insist that everyone fire their work. If a student would rather take the clay home, I supplied clear "ziplock" bags with instructions of "How to Reuse Clay". Students liked having this choice. Student's first experience with clay can be frustrating because of the limited time allowed to get the desired result. The option of taking the clay home to practice some more took the frustration out of working with clay.

Another advantage of the "take the clay home" option was overworked clay was taken home instead of risking it blowing up in the kiln and taking more carefully worked pieces with it.

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The Process: Raw Clay to Finished Product – Teacher Tips



Teaching thousands of students at a school with a high turn over rate taught me the value of a well worded and placed sign. I wanted my students to learn as much as they possibly could in the short time I got to work with them. I didn't have time to take them all in the clay room, but they could see in and see the sign, and begin to build their art vocabulary. I considered all the walls as instructional space.



This is the inside of a kiln being loaded for firing. The shelves are built up as the kiln is being loaded. Bisque pieces can be set inside one another, if they are very dry and you are certain there are no air bubbles. Work that is glazed needs to be "not touching" and the glaze needs to not touch the shelf or it may become permanently affixed to it. Stilts may need to be used.



Safety was always on my mind when it came to firing the kiln. No flammable materials stored in the kiln room especially when in use. Main power (circuit breaker) off when not in use. Only fire kiln when present in the building. Make sure the fan is on during the whole firing process so fumes will not enter the classroom. Use the built in timer. Keep the door to the kiln room closed and locked when firing. When done, double check to make sure everything is turned off.



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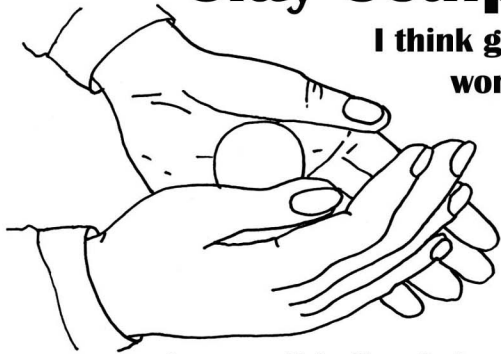
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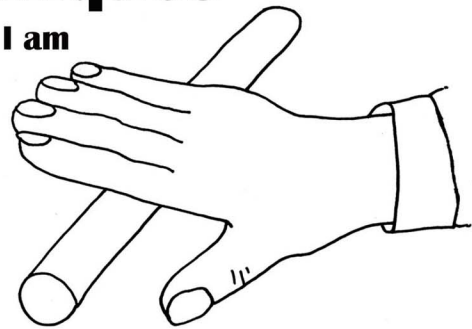
Clay Sculpture Techniques

I think gentle and slow, when I am working with moist clay.

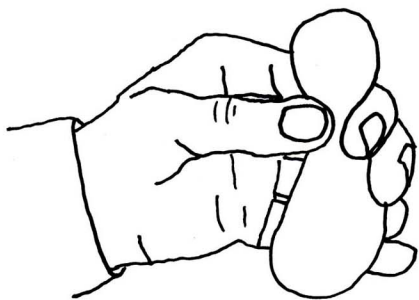
Remember, gentle and slow.



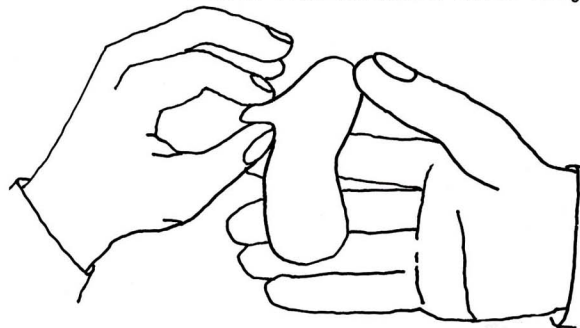
I can roll balls of clay.



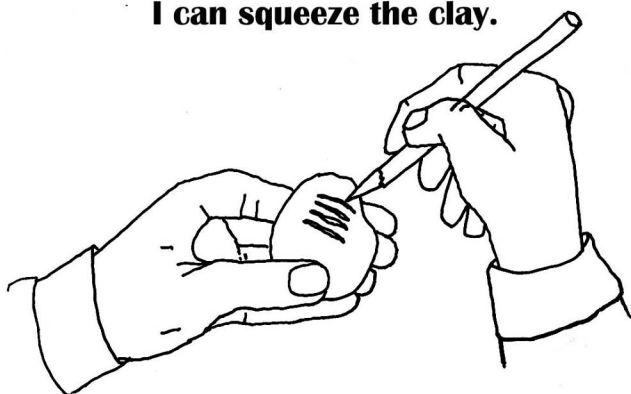
I can roll snakes with clay.



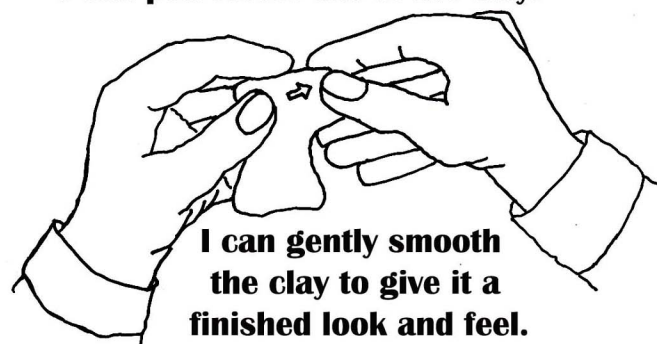
I can squeeze the clay.



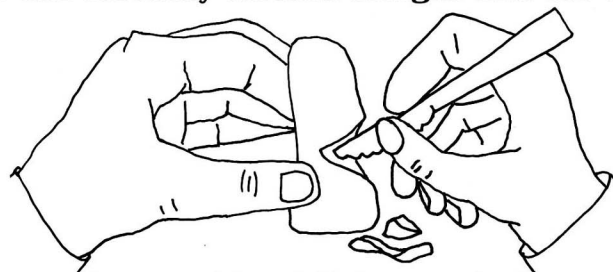
I can pull forms out of the clay.



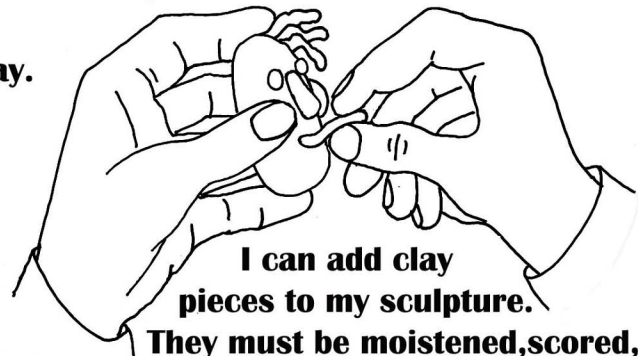
I can carefully scratch designs into the clay.



I can gently smooth the clay to give it a finished look and feel.



I can subtract (take away) pieces of clay. I can use tools or my fingers.



I can add clay pieces to my sculpture. They must be moistened, scored, and smoothed or, when the clay dries, the pieces will fall off.

Which techniques can I use to sculpt the idea in my head?

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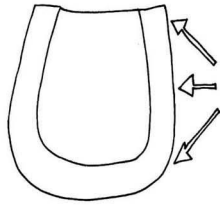
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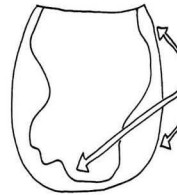


Clay Pinch Pot

I think gentle and slow, when I am working with moist clay.

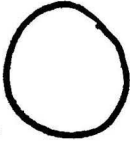


My goal, when first learning to form a pot (vessel), is to make the sides and bottom uniform (even) and not too thin.

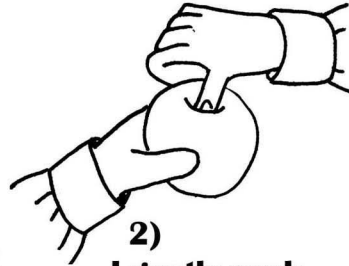


This is not a good example. I do not want it thin in some places and thick in others. (Thin, uneven sides can weaken the pot and cause it to crack or break)

1) I roll a ball of clay.



(I do not over roll or over work the clay because it causes drying and cracking. It makes the clay difficult to work with.)



2) I gently push my thumb or finger into the center of the ball.



3) I press way down to the bottom, but not through the bottom.



4) Using my thumb and fingers, I gently pinch to widen the pot.



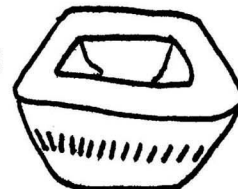
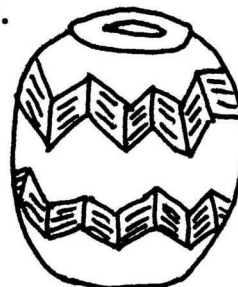
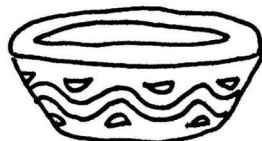
5) I gently turn the clay and gently pinch, and turn and pinch, and turn and pinch. I try to keep even pressure as I pinch.



6) I flatten the bottom by gently pressing it against a flat surface. I smooth the rough spots. I can use tools or my fingers. I apply the needed pressure to get the job done.



7) I add details. I use my imagination. I place my hand inside my pot when I need added support. I do not want my pot (vessel) to lose its shape.



I use a variety of lines and shapes to make interesting patterns.

Which clay sculpture techniques am I using?

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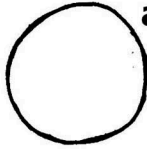
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Clay Coil Snake

I use the palm of my hands, not my fingers, to roll coils (cylinders).

- 1) I start with a small to medium ball of clay.



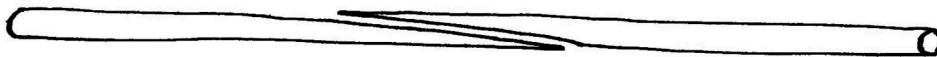
- 2) I begin rolling it evenly into a cylinder.



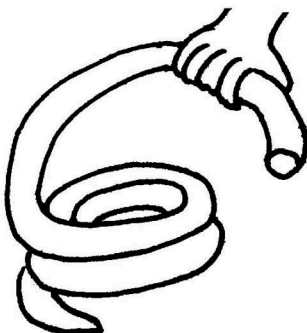
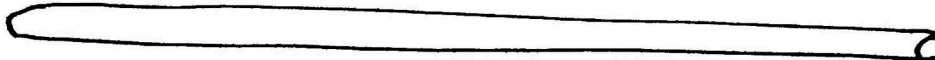
- 3) I carefully roll the cylinder (coil) longer and thinner.



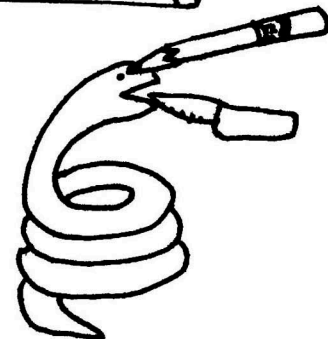
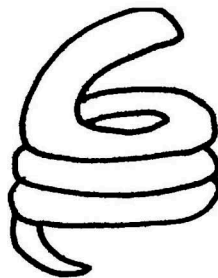
If my coil gets too thin and weak, I can repair (fix) it. I do not ball it up and start over. Balling up my clay will make it harder to work with because it will be dry and cracked.



I break it at the weak spot, overlap it and smooth it until it is whole again.

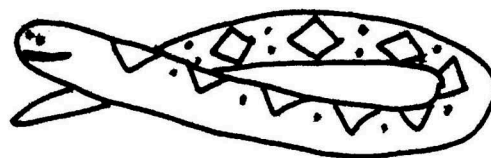
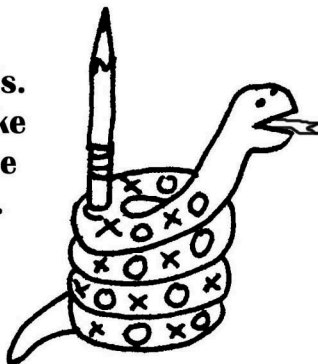


- 4) I wind the coil around on itself to form my snake sculpture. I leave a little piece sticking out for the "tail".



- 5) With simple tools, I add features like the eyes. I cut open a mouth. I can add a tiny coil to make a tongue.

- 6) I add details. Details make my art more interesting. Patterns work well.



I can make a more simple snake by overlapping only once.

How many other ways can I imagine making snakes with coils?

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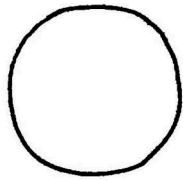
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Clay Slab Sun

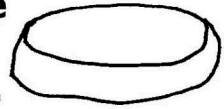
A slab is a flat piece of clay. I use a firm, gentle touch, as I work with clay.



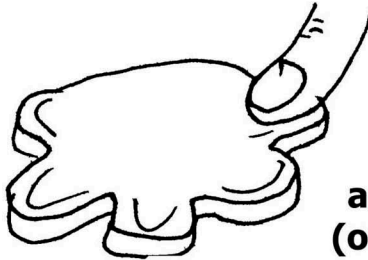
1) I roll a sphere (ball) of clay.



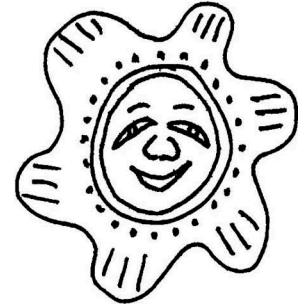
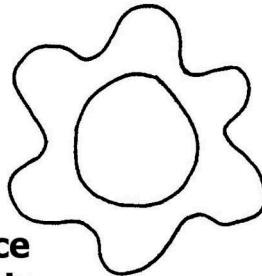
2) I flatten the sphere to make a thick, round pancake shape.



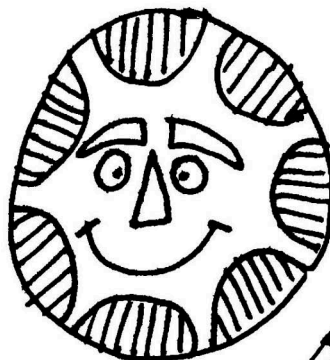
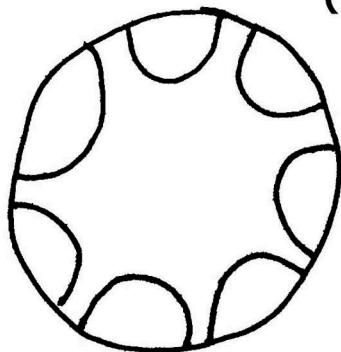
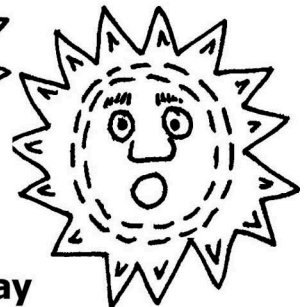
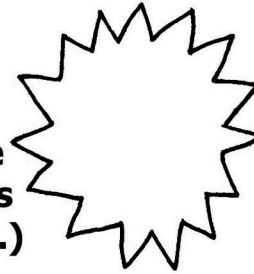
3) I shape my sun. I know a variety of (many different) ways to form my sun relief sculpture.



I can make the rays of the sun using my thumb. I can pinch a design all the way around the circumference (outside edge) of the circle.

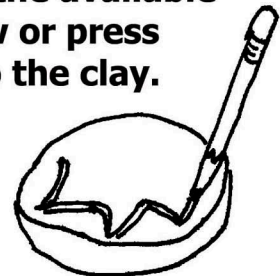
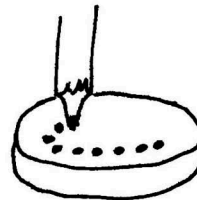
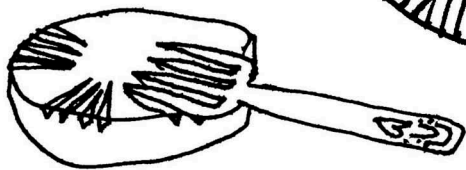


I can cut shapes from the clay in a radial pattern. I can save the cut pieces to add features (nose, eyebrows, eyes, etc.) to my sun sculpture.



4) I smooth my clay before I add details or designs.

I can keep the circle contour and simply use the available tools to draw or press a design into the clay.



Which clay sculpture techniques am I using?

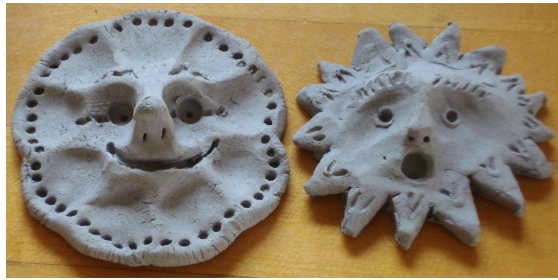
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Slab Sun Photo Examples



Above: These two simple suns are clay (unfired=not baked). The rest have been fired in a kiln so they are bisque ware.

To the Right: This sun a 1st grade student gave to me in 1993. I still have it. It brings me joy every time I look at it. When we express ourselves through art, it has the power to move us and others.



Above: These painted ones have been painted with either watercolor or acrylic. None here are glazed which requires another firing in the kiln. There are so many ways to make Slab Suns. These are just a few examples. Use your imagination and create your own style and design.



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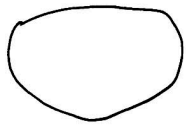
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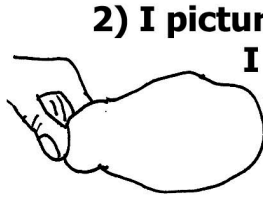
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Clay Animal Pot

I think gentle and slow, when I am working with moist clay.



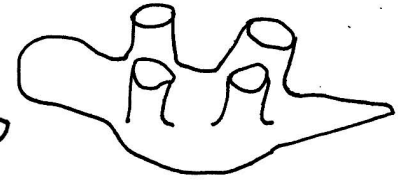
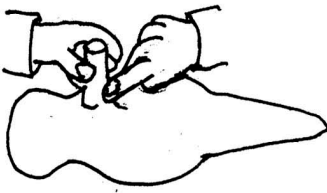
1) I start with an oval like shape.



2) I picture the animal I want to make. I gently pull clay to form a head and a tail.

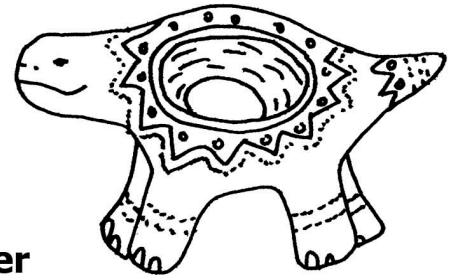
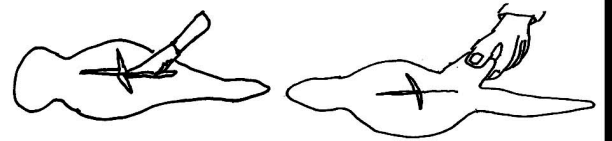


3) With another piece of clay, I roll a coil (a long thin cylinder). I estimate and divide it into four equal parts to form legs.



4) I add the legs one at a time. I am careful to firmly attach and smooth together the legs to the body. (If I do not, as the legs dry, they may crack and fall off.)

An alternative way to make the legs:
I cut a cross on the "belly" of the animal. I put my finger in the center of the cross and pull out each "V" to make the four legs.



5) I make my animal into a pot. I press my finger into the top and gently widen the hole.

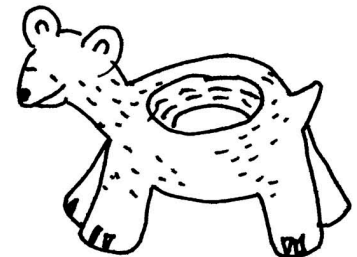
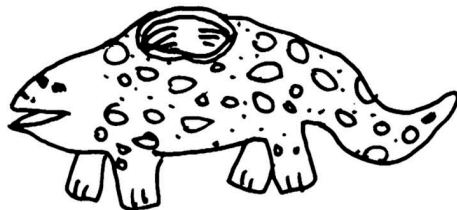


I can cut the mouth open.



I can pull out ears.

6) I decorate.
I add detail.



Which clay sculpture techniques am I using?

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Animal Pot Examples



Dog Pot



Goat Pot



Bird Pot Examples Viewed from a Variety of Angles



What animal is this?



What about a pot with an animal attached?



Snail Pot

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Animal Pots Photo Examples 2

There are so many ways to make animal pots. These are just a small sample of examples of turtle pots. Use your imagination and create your own style and design.



The above examples are ceramic. They have been fired once in the kiln (clay oven). Clay fired once is bisque ware.

These last 2 examples are both "green ware", raw clay that has not been fired (baked in a kiln) yet. These 2 animal pots were made by teachers at an in-service I hosted when I was an art teacher. The Turtle Pot shows some great detail. The Cat Pot shows a playful imagination. Be sure to use yours.



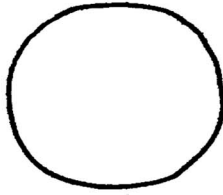
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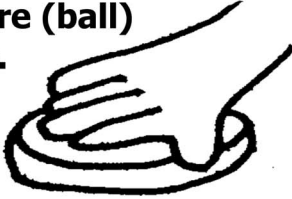
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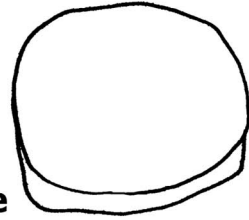
Clay Slab Cut Away



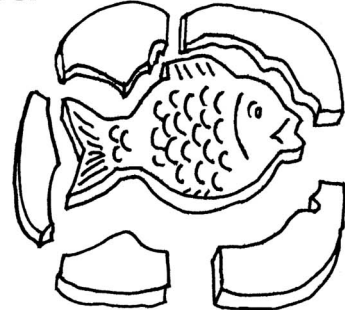
1) I roll a sphere (ball) of clay.



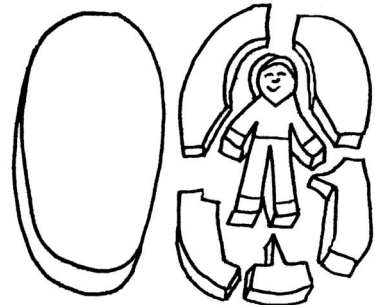
2) I gently flatten the sphere to make a thick, round pancake shape.



3) I imagine what I want to make with my slab of clay. Then, I lightly draw it in the clay. If I want to change the image, I can easily smooth it over and draw again.

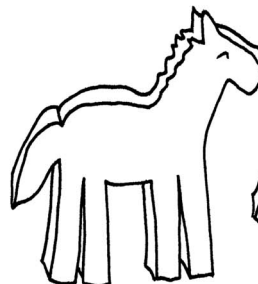
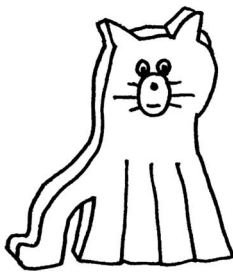


4) Next, I cut the outline of my image deeper and cut away the excess clay.



5) I smooth edges and add detail.

A flat clay work can be made to stand up with a bit of gentle reshaping before firing the work. (See photo examples for more examples.)



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