

Why are Greek pots important to historians & archaeologists ?

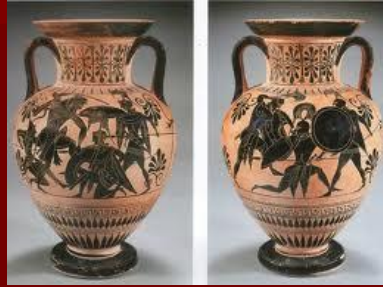


Greek pots are important because they tell us so much about how life was in Athens and other ancient Greek cities.



Pots came in all sorts of shapes and sizes depending on their purpose, and were often beautifully decorated with scenes from daily life.

Potty about Life!



Pottery was usually painted with designs related to how the pot was used

For example,

A water pitcher might show a scene where a woman is at the water house fetching water, for most Greek homes didn't have running water.



The making of the pots usually took two people, the potter and the painter. The potters would have made more profit than the painters.

This black Figure Greek pot from around 490 BC shows Heracles fighting the Nemean Lion.



The Greeks believed that the goddess **Athena** invented the potter's wheel.

*The Statue of the Goddess Athena (c. 340 BCE),
at the Piraeus Museum, Athens, Greece.*



Potter working clay on
a potter's wheel

Clay pot making

Coil and pinch (thumb) pottery are two simple techniques that can have great results.



To finish off our year in Art, you are going to be exploring the ceramic ware of different cultures and historical periods. This is the final week that you will be honing your skills in ceramics so lets go out with a "bang". Not a "crash" however as this might mean you have dropped your ceramic pot!

Your task: Research Greek ceramic ware by answering the questions below.

What was it made from?

How was it made?

Who used it?

What made it special?

Can you describe its typical shape and design?

Once you have done this, save your work, you will add to it next week when we explore another type of ceramic wear from another culture.

Task 2: Can you make it? Have a go at making your chosen type of Greek ceramic ware using salt dough. There are step by step instructions on each of the slides on how to make a pot. As ever, the recipe for salt dough is on the next slide too! Good Luck, Year 4. Impress me!

Ingredients

1 cupful of plain flour (about 250g)
half a cupful of table salt (about 125g)
half a cupful of water (about 125ml)

Method

1. Preheat the oven to its lowest setting and line a baking sheet with baking parchment.
2. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. Add the water and stir until it comes together into a ball.
3. Transfer the dough to a floured work surface and shape into your chosen model. You can roll it out and cut out shapes, numbers or letters using biscuit cutters, or make any kind of model you can think of. We made some fruit and veg shapes plus cupcakes for a teddy bear's picnic.
4. Put your finished items on the lined baking sheet and bake until solid. Mr. Spencer found that your dough could be done after just 30 minutes on a heat of 180 degrees C.

I would love to see the finished results!

First...

Squeezing the clay into a coil or rolling between your hands are two ways to make coils.



This technique can be difficult to make a smooth round coil because of the uneven pressure from your hands and fingers.



When hand rolling coils, use a smooth surface and spreading your hands to apply even pressure. Gently roll the clay back and forth.

Next make sure...

- The coils are a good thickness



Roll the coils so that they are a little thicker than a pencil. Then stack the coils one on top of another cutting off the excess pieces.

Then...

For strength, force the clay together on the inside and outside of the piece. Use your finger or plastic knife to scrape the top coil onto the coil under it.



Now..

- When you are happy with the size and length of your pot gently smooth inside and outside



When smoothing the inside of the piece hold you other hand on the outside and when doing the outside the other hand should be supporting the inside

This will stop you damaging and mis shaping your pot.

If you want...

- You can level the top by turning turn your pot over and lightly tapping it on a smooth surface.



Finally...

- Let your pot dry slowly



- Now you are ready to decorate your pot.

Start...

with a ball of clay about the size of a medium orange

Make sure the clay has been well kneaded to get rid of the air in the clay



The first step to making your pinch pot is to start the opening. Cradle the ball of clay in one hand and gently press the end of your thumb into the clay. A good method is to press down a bit with your thumb and then give the clay a bit of a turn — press down some more and then give it another little turn



- This helps to keep the hole you are making centred and the walls an even thickness. When you sense that you are getting close to the other side of the clay ball, stop before you go through

Now the fun part begins — forming your pot!



- The idea is to gently press the clay from the inside with your thumb against your fingers on the outside. Each time you press a bit with your thumb, give the clay a bit of a turn before you press again. It doesn't matter if you turn the pot clockwise or counterclockwise, just work in a way that seems natural to you.



- This photo shows the technique from a different angle. If you curve your fingers slightly, you can control the shape a bit better and make a more rounded form. If your fingers are held flat against the outside, the pot rim will flare out more to make an open bowl shape. Experiment to see what kinds of forms you can make. Continue the pinching and turning method until the walls of the pot are thinned out to a thickness that seems about right to you.



- With a bit of patience and practice, it is possible to make quite a finely crafted bowl with this simple technique. The main thing to remember while working is to try for an even wall thickness as you pinch your way around the bowl

- When you are happy with the shape leave it to dry.



- Another idea!

- You can create texture on the outside of the pot if you wish by pressing objects into the wall or by carving some patterns onto the surface.