

Stone Age Pottery Instructions

Materials needed: string cut into 50 cm lengths/clay/scrap paper to work on/sticks to add decorative detail

Information you may like to give the children:

- Pottery is one of the oldest human inventions, and we still use it today!
- The shape and decoration of pottery changes according to who (ie. Stone age/Bronze Age/Roman etc) was making it and where. You could compare this to fashion and hairstyles.
- Fired pottery doesn't decompose in the same way as organic matter (like wood and bone) and is essential to helping archaeologists date a site.
- Clay is created through the natural erosion of rocks and organic matter.

Instructions you may like to give the children:

- Children will need to work together to make the whipped string cords.
- The clay will dry out if you work it too much – add a tiny drop of water with the tips of your fingers to soften it.
- When the pots are finished they need two or three days to dry.
- Wait for the clay on your hands to dry before washing them – it's much less messy!

Follow-on activities

1. How long does it take the clay to dry on your hands? What is happening when it dries?
2. Weigh a small piece of wet clay. Leave it to dry, then weigh it again. What has happened and why?
3. The earliest writing (cuneiform script) was written on clay tablets by the Mesopotamians. When/where did this happen? (3200BC/modern-day Iraq).
4. Have a go at creating your own clay tablets.
5. How did the Stone Age people discover that clay could be made to stay in its solid state by firing? Write a story about how this happened.