

Clay unit: CONCEPTS

Clay is a medium that has its own timing. The condition of the clay—how moist, is a primary concern. When slabs are rolled out, the clay is too wet to hold a shape and must be left to become more solid as it dries.

Clay has a specific kind of expressive quality. If it is interfered with too much, the object being made begins to resemble a potato. So, the clay must be touched in order for shapes to be formed, but how much and how it is touched is a concern.

The structure of clay objects being formed must be compact, with no pendulous projections attached. It is up to the student to discover what clay can do well and what it is not able to do well.

All art mediums have a “voice.” The success of an art piece depends on the artist being able to exploit a medium for what it does well and avoid what it does not do well.

VOCABULARY:

Ceramic clay: is a fine-grained natural soil mixed with water that becomes soft and easy to shape. When heated at high heat in an oven called a kiln, it turns into a hard, strong, and lasting material.

Slab building: Slabbing clay, or slab building, is a hand-building pottery technique where a potter flattens clay into uniform sheets or flat pieces using a rolling pin, specialized machine, or by hand. These flat slabs are then cut into specific shapes and joined together using liquid clay (slip) to build geometric forms, boxes, tiles, or curved vessels.

Slabbing clay: Kneading clay to get the air bubbles out.

Scoring clay: Scoring clay is the process of scratching hatch marks or shallow grooves into the surface of two separate clay pieces before joining them together with liquid clay (**slip**). This texturing creates a rough, interlocking grip so the pieces do not crack or fall apart as they dry and fire.