# Working With Clay

The vocabulary

- There's more to working with clay than being good with your hands.
  - Knowing the proper terms can help you understand the process and improve your technique.







# What is Clay?



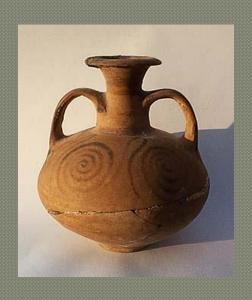
### Clay:

 A basic substance that comes from Mother Earth. It's made up of decomposed rock; when combined with water, clay is plastic enough to be shaped; when subject to high heat, it becomes hard and rock-like.

### Grog:

Ground-up fired clay that is mixed into soft clay;
Strengthens and aids in even drying and firing; Creates a rough texture in the clay

# What is pottery?



Pottery is earthenware objects – especially pots - which are made of fired clay.

Pots are functional objects like plates, bowls, cups, jars, vases, pitchers, bottles, and boxes.

### Plasticity

 The quality of clay that allows it to be manipulated.



### Wedging:

Kneading the clay to remove all air bubbles

(Improper or lack of wedging could lead to a piece exploding or breaking in the kiln)  $\odot$ 

### Score and Slip:

- The method used to attach two pieces of clay together.
  - First, score the clay; this means creating scratches in the surfaces that will be stuck together.
  - 2. Then slip it; that is wetting the surface with some "slip", using it as glue.
  - 3. Next, *press* the two surfaces together.
  - (It is very important to always score and slip.
     Without scoring and slipping, the pieces will likely pop apart when they are fired. 
     (B)



### 2 Basic Pottery Building <u>Techniques</u>

### Wheel Thrown

 To "throw" a pot is to form the clay on a potter's wheel as it is spinning.



OR

### Hand-Building:

 Building pottery using only the hands and simple tools rather than the potters wheel.



Partial List of **hand building** (building clay pieces without the use of a potters wheel)techniques:

1. Pinch Construction



2. Coil Construction



3. Slab Construction



# Other important terms

- Kiln –the type of "oven" used throughout the firing process.
- Fire –the cooking of the clay in the kiln, sometimes for as long as 20 hours.
- Glaze –a form of liquid glass put on bisqueware to have a decorative coating or finish





# Stages of Dryness

- Slip liquid clay
- Plastic easily workable clay
- Leather Hard partially dry but still able to carve; attach decorative pieces, handles, etc.
- Bone Dry or Green ware completely dry, no longer workable, very fragile, lighter in color
- Bisque clay that has been fired in a kiln but is still porous (vitrified)

## Morphology of a Vase

