



Spark your interest in clay by learning what clay is and where it comes from, learning to use natural clay as an art medium, learning to use a pottery wheel, and learning to design art with alternatives to natural clay, including polymer clay.



Exploring 4-H Visual Arts Clay

Spark Activity: Clay Coils



Using clay as a medium for art has lots of fun possibilities. You can use your own creativity to incorporate elements of art and principles of design into your artwork.

Creating clay coils is a simple technique with many possible outcomes. You can practice this technique with natural clay or with a homemade clay made from ingredients in your kitchen (things like flour, salt, and/or cornstarch).

Begin with a small piece of clay. Roll it out on a solid surface so that it is the shape of a snake or sausage. Continue to roll with your entire hand - rolling evenly from your wrist to your fingertips - opening your hand wide as the coil gets longer. It takes some practice to get an evenly shaped coil. Once you've mastered a coil that is long and even (like a straw), use the coil to create different types of coil shapes:

- Spirals (rolled like a cinnamon roll)
- Arches (like a rainbow)
- Donuts
- Folds (like a ribbon candy)
- Twists
- Braids

How can you combine the different coil shapes to create a piece of clay artwork with a variety of elements of art and principles of design?

4-H Project Levels and Goals

Beginner

- Learn about ceramic tools for molding, cleaning, and painting
- Learn to create artwork from clay using pinch, coil, and strip methods
- Learn purpose / procedures for firing
- Identify types of glazes and glazing

Intermediate

- Learn the purpose of the three main types of clay - earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain
- Learn about underglazing and overglazing
- Learn terms related to pottery / clay artwork

Advanced

- Create art with a type of clay that you have not used in prior years
- Learn to use a potter's wheel
- Learn hand-forming with a template
- Use carving and sgraffito techniques

Put Your Project Into Action

Show Your Skills

- Report about a favorite clay artist's work
- Examples of design elements or art principles using clay as a medium
- Portfolio of work you have created using clay
- Photo or digital display of famous art pieces made from clay

Service and Leadership

- Teach younger members how to create an art piece using clay
- Make and donate clay artwork to a local nursing home
- Create clay artwork and donate it to a fundraising event or auction in support of a local cause
- Volunteer at a local art event or art show
- Invite an artist to teach a workshop at a 4-H club meeting
- Volunteer to serve on a local Art Council

Entrepreneurship

- Create and sell your artwork online or at local shows
- Design and sell clay ornaments featuring a school mascot or club / organization emblem (with copyright or trademark permission)
- Teach art classes featuring clay

Technology Connection

- Digital ceramics
- Ceramic 3D printing
- Digital fabrication

Connecting with a Mentor

- School art teacher
- Community college art instructor/students
- Local art museum staff or volunteers/docents
- Network with artists at community craft/art shows

Events

- Local and state 4-H workshops or shows
- Classes offered through local community colleges, park districts, or museums
- Local, state, and national art competitions
- Community craft / art shows



Careers for People Interested in Clay

Potter
Art Teacher
Art Museum Director

Industrial Designer
Art Therapist
Dental Ceramist

Start a Conversation

Who are the most fascinating clay artists that you've learned about?

What are the most interesting clay pieces that famous artists have created?

What is a new clay technique that you would like to learn?

Want to learn more?

go.illinois.edu/4Hclay

Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

4-h.extension.illinois.edu



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