

# Knowledge Web: Clay

Clay is the longest-known ceramic material. Prehistoric humans discovered the useful properties of clay and used it for making pottery. Some of the earliest pottery shards have been dated to around 14,000 BCE, and clay tablets were the first known writing medium.

## Attaching 2 pieces of clay – slip and score



### Techniques

**Sculpture:** Most sculptures are created using a combination of shapes to make things we can recognise, like the face in the Dream sculpture. Sculptors use texture to show feelings and expression. This technique can make the sculpture more lifelike.

There are lots of different techniques you can use to model the clay. You can pinch, coil, score, carve and smooth.



## What is a kiln?

The simple way to think of a kiln is that it is like an oven that gets REALLY HOT! A kiln is a fairly simple structure on the outside that is usually square, rectangle or cylindrical in shape, there are lots of different kinds. There are lots of types; the most popular are gas, wood and electric kilns, which means they are powered by gas, wood or electric.



## Vocabulary

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Slip and score | A method of joining two pieces of clay together.  |
| Sculpture      | A 3D form of art. A piece of art that has height, width and depth.                                |
| Texture        | The feel and/or appearance of a surface.  |
| Sculptor       | An artist who makes sculptures.   |
| Malleable      | Able to be pressed or moulded into a shape without cracking or breaking.                          |
| Carve          | To cut a pattern or design into a surface.  |
| Glaze          | Paint that is added to fired clay to create colour that then needs to be fired                    |
| Kiln           | A kiln is a piece of machinery that essentially cooks the clay and turns it from clay to ceramic. |