

Teacher Toolkits: Clay Types

Prepared by Glen Clydesdale, Edinburgh Design School

Earthenware Clay

Earthenware is glazed or unglazed non-vitreous pottery that has normally been fired below 1200°C

- Historically Earthenware clay comprises all terra-cottas, most building bricks, nearly all European pottery up to the seventeenth century, most ceramics of ancient Egypt and Persia and also of Greek, Roman and Mediterranean production
- Pit fired earthenware dates to as early as 29,000–25,000 BC
- Today, finer earthenware is commonly used for lower value tableware
- When fired Earthenware is not waterproof, and is soft and capable of being scratched with a knife
- Due to its porosity, earthenware must be glazed to be watertight. Earthenware has a lower strength than stoneware, and therefore most items produced are thicker
- Darker coloured terracotta earthenware is typically orange due to a high content of iron oxide, and commonly used for flower pots and tiles.

Stoneware Clay

Stoneware is glazed or unglazed vitreous or semi-vitreous pottery that has normally been fired to approximately 1240°C

- Historically, across the world, it was developed after earthenware and before porcelain
- Stoneware clay has often been used for high-quality tableware, as well as utilitarian wares such as toilets
- Stoneware is strong when fired and yet an inexpensive body, compared with porcelain
- It is impermeable to water and therefore glaze is applied to change the colour or surface quality

Supporting Makers, Promoting Craft

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- It is usually coloured grey or brownish because of impurities in the clay
- Stoneware is often used for manufacturing

About Making Spaces

Through the Making Spaces programme, Craft Scotland offers opportunities for people of all ages to engage with contemporary craft and work with makers from across Scotland. The act of making can actively improve quality of life and promote social inclusion and so we work with partners to deliver long-term projects for targeted groups and communities. Making Spaces involves participants in creative learning enabling them to learn new skills from experienced makers and develop their knowledge of craft processes and materials. It also benefits makers by encouraging them to experiment with their practice, meet new audiences and gain experience within different settings and communities.

Over the last few years, we have worked with a range of organisations including Historic Environment Scotland, National Museums of Scotland, Ostrero, The Living Memory Association and NHS Lothian.

Learn more: www.craftscotland.org/about/projects/making-spaces

About Craft Scotland

Craft Scotland is the national development agency for craft. We put makers at the heart of all we do, championing diverse and high-quality contemporary craft. We help people learn about, appreciate and buy craft, promoting the contribution of craft to Scotland's cultural, economic and social well-being.

We are a registered charity supported by Creative Scotland.

Learn more: www.craftscotland.org

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