



EduTrend Contents

W4C · CRAFTS AND HANDMADE ARTS · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Pinch and Coil Pots

Build a vessel by hand from clay

Ages 11–14

Level: Intermediate

60 minutes

Individual · up to 30

Activity 03

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 03 · AT A GLANCE

Pinch and Coil Pots

Students study hand-built pots from different cultures, then practise pinch and coil methods. They join coils with score and slip to build a vessel with a planned profile, add surface decoration, and learn what happens to clay as it dries and is fired.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- make a pinch pot with even walls;
- build with coils using score and slip;
- plan a vessel profile and decoration;
- explain the stages of clay from wet to fired.

KEY WORDS

pinch pot · coil · slip · score ·
leather-hard · greenware · bisque ·
kiln · glaze

CURRICULUM LINKS

Art and design: ceramics and 3D form. Science: changes of state and materials. History: ancient pottery.

1**EXPLORE**

Look and handle

2**IMAGINE**

Generate ideas

3**PLAN**

Sketch and
measure

4**MAKE**

Practise the
technique

5**REFLECT**

Check and critique

6**REFINE**

Finish and share

Materials (per student)

- About 500 g of clay, or air-dry clay if no kiln
- Clay boards, damp cloths, modelling tools
- Slip in small pots and old brushes
- Profile templates
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Wedge clay and wrap it to stay moist.
- Prepare slip.
- Make a demonstration pinch pot and coil section.
- Check kiln availability or use air-dry clay.

SAFETY

Wipe surfaces with damp cloths; never sweep dry clay dust. Wash hands. Only trained staff operate kilns.

ACTIVITY 03 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Most joins fail because they are not scored and slipped: make it a rule every time.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Show hand-built pots from different times and places.	<i>"How were these made without a wheel?"</i>
10–20 min Pinch	Make a pinch pot with even walls.	<i>"Can you keep the walls the same thickness?"</i>
20–30 min Coils	Roll even coils and join them with score and slip.	<i>"Why do we score and slip?"</i>
30–50 min Build	Build a coil vessel on the pinch pot base following a profile.	<i>"Is your vessel growing outwards or inwards?"</i>
50–60 min Decorate	Add texture or smooth the surface, then wrap to dry slowly.	<i>"How will the surface change when fired?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Build a vessel at least 10 cm tall from a pinch base and coils, with secure joins and planned surface decoration.

ACTIVITY 03 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The craft in brief

Hand-building shapes clay without a potter's wheel. A pinch pot is made by pressing the thumb into a ball and turning it. Coils are rolled ropes of clay stacked to build walls. Joins are made by scoring both surfaces and adding slip, a liquid clay that acts like glue.

As clay dries it shrinks and becomes leather-hard, then bone-dry greenware. Firing in a kiln, often around 1000 °C for a first bisque firing of earthenware, changes it permanently into ceramic. Glazes are glassy coatings that melt onto the surface in a further firing. Coil building has been used for thousands of years in many cultures.

Common ideas to listen for

- "Clay can be fired straight away." It must dry completely or it may crack or burst.
- "Water glues clay together." Score and slip make much stronger joins.
- "Air-dry clay is the same as fired clay." It is weaker and not waterproof.

Adapting the activity

Support

Make a pinch pot only and decorate it with texture.

Stretch

Build a vessel with a change in profile, such as a narrow neck, or add a handle.

WORKSHEET 1

Techniques

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Record each technique.

Pinch pot: how I kept the walls even

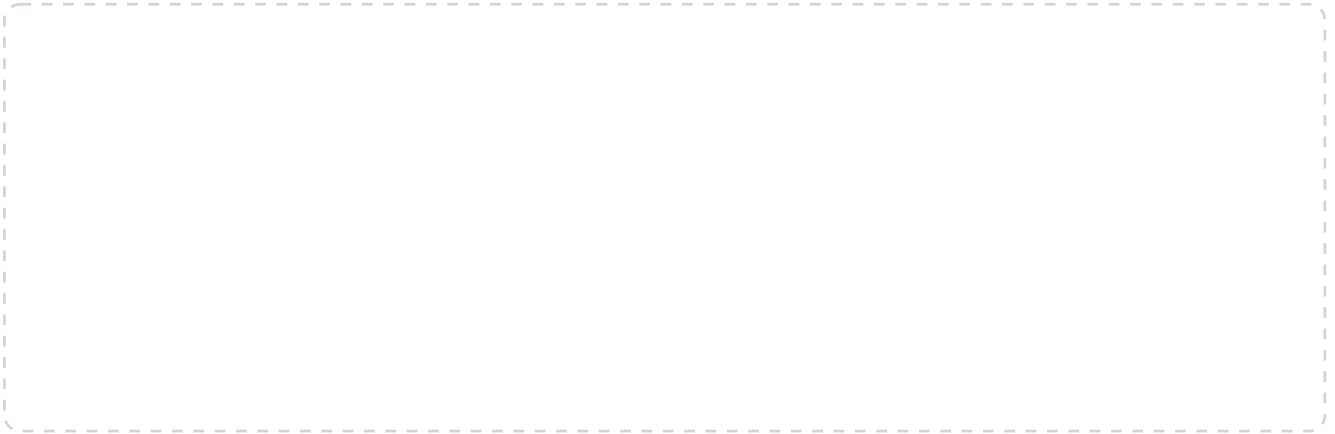
Score and slip: why it works

WORKSHEET 2

Vessel plan

Plan your vessel.

Profile and decoration



Draw the side view of your vessel and plan the decoration.

WORKSHEET 3

Clay journey

Order the stages and reflect.

Stages

Stage	What happens
Wet clay	
Leather-hard	
Greenware	
Bisque	
Glazed	

One improvement

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Builds with secure joins	Controls form	Explains clay stages

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Pinch and Coil Pots is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Crafts and Handmade Arts programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

© 2026 EduTrend Contents. This activity may be printed and copied for use with students in your own school, club or home. It may not be resold or published elsewhere. Photos: Anne Nygård / Unsplash.