

# Pottery Merit Badge Requirements

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## 1. Safety

Explain to your counselor the precautions that must be followed for the safe use and operation of a potter's tools, equipment, and other materials.

**Why:** *While in a pottery studio, artists build with slab, decorate with glazes, throw on the wheel and use a kiln along with other equipment not covered by this merit badge.*

*'Safe use and operation' are ways to prevent or protect against:*

*breathing contaminated air, tripping, electric shock, burns, cuts, muscle strain and pulls, and repetitive stress injury*

## 2. Clay Bodies

a. Explain to your counselor the properties and ingredients of a good clay body for the following:

1. Making sculpture using the hand-building method
2. Throwing on the wheel

b. Tell how three different kinds of potter's wheels work

**Why:** *Different types of clay respond better to different types of form building methods.*

*Ensuring there is a good match leads to a better chance of a successful outcome.*

*Different throwing wheels require different skills.*

## 3. Form Styles

Make two drawings of pottery forms, each on an 8 1/2-by-11-inch sheet of paper.

1. A historical pottery style.
2. Your own design.

**Why:** *Pottery is an ancient and evolving art form as well as many practical functions used by ancient peoples. Looking at what people did in the past with ceramics gives insight into what was important to people, their society and the evolution of science and art. Creating your own forms lets you express your own ideas and how they may relate to the past and future.*

## 4. More About Materials, Methods and Tools

Explain the meaning of the following pottery terms:

Terra-cotta, earthenware, stoneware, porcelain, greenware, leather hard, bone dry, bisque, pyrometric cone, grog, slip, score, glaze, wedging, throwing, bat

**Why:** *These are some of the most common terms used in constructing ceramic forms. If you can explain these terms you have a basic understanding of the materials and techniques used to create ceramic forms.*

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### 5. Create Your Own Forms

Do the following:

Each piece is to be painted, glazed, or otherwise decorated by you.

- a. Make a slab pot, a coil pot, and a pinch pot.
- b. Make a human or animal figurine or decorative sculpture
- c. Throw a functional form on a potter's wheel
- d. Help an experienced adult to load and fire a kiln OR describe in detail how to load and fire a kiln.

**Why:** *Because this is the fun part!!! These are the core methods of creating a ceramic form. Creating each of these types of forms helps you understand how clay moves, and how paint and glaze interact with the clay bodies.*

### 6. Ceramics beyond Pottery and Art

Explain the scope of the ceramic industry in the United States. Tell some things made other than craft pottery.

**Why:** *The use of ceramics goes far beyond pots and sculptures. It is important to understand how ceramics influence our day to day lives.*

### 7. Ceramics Arts in the Big World

With your parent or guardian's permission and your counselor's approval, do **ONE** or the following:

- a. Visit the kiln yard at a local college or other craft school. Learn how the different kinds of kilns work, including low fire electric, gas or propane high fire, wood or salt/soda, and raku.
- b. Visit a museum, art exhibit, art gallery, artists' co-op, or artist's studio that features pottery. After your visit, share with your counselor what you have learned.
- c. Using resources from the library, magazines, the internet (with your parent or guardian's permission), and other outlets, learn about the historical and cultural importance of pottery.

Share what you discovered with your counselor.

**Why:** Learning how pottery is made at a larger scale gives you an appreciation of just how much ceramics influences our world.

### 8. Working in Ceramics

Find out about career opportunities in pottery. Pick one and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this profession might interest you.

**Why:** *Many people find their passion at a young age. Who knows, maybe this is yours!*