

Sculpture with clay

What can pottery tell us about the past?

Lesson 1: How has pottery taught us about life in the past?













Art core and supporting skills



Core skills

- Appreciating and reflecting ✓
- Experimenting
- Creating
- Drawing
- Sculpting
- Developing technique

Supporting skills

- Exploring materials and techniques
- Refining lines, shading and expression
- Building balanced 3D artworks
- Recording inspirations and progress
- Studying artists, movements and history ✓
- Understanding art's impact and culture ✓
- Evaluating with art vocabulary

What can pottery tell us about the past?



Lesson 1: How has pottery taught us about life in the past?

Lesson 2: How can we best make a coil pot?

Lesson 3: How can I develop my mastery of clay sculpture?

Lesson 4: How can I best use colour to enhance my sculpture?

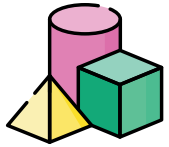
Lesson 5: What can we learn from pottery?



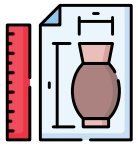
Key vocabulary for this lesson



balance – when something stands evenly and doesn't fall over



form – the 3D shape of something you can see and touch



proportion – the correct size of parts compared to each other



shape – changing something by pressing or moving it



symbolism – when an object or image stands for an idea or meaning

What is art?

Art helps us share our **ideas** and **creativity**.
We start with an idea, look at examples from around the world and history, and find ways to bring it to life.





When we learn about sculptures, we:

- explore materials like clay
- shape and join to make 3D forms
- take ideas from nature and the world around us
- use colour and texture to decorate
- reflect on our work and improve it



New word alert!



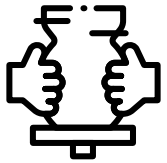
sculpture – art that is made by shaping or building materials like clay, wood, metal, or stone into 3D forms

Word detective



sculpture – art that is made by shaping or building materials like clay, wood, metal, or stone into 3D forms

The word '**sculpture**' comes from Latin and means '**the result of carving or shaping**'.





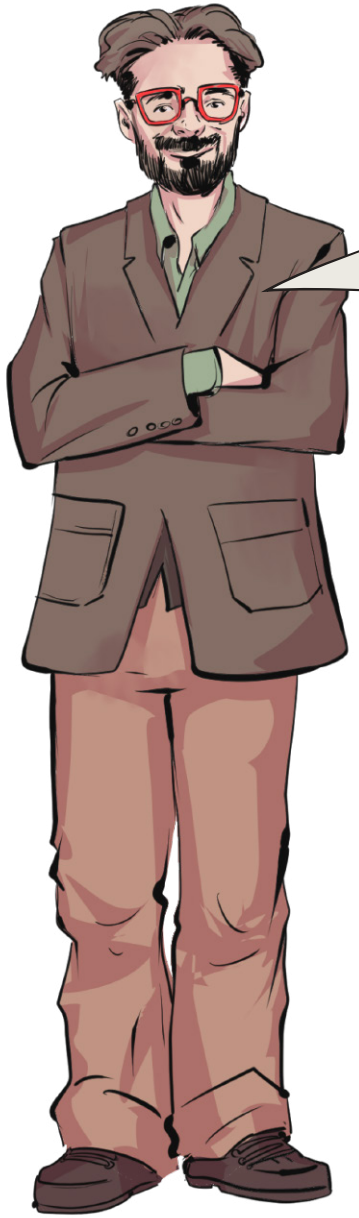
sculpt ⊕ **ure** = **sculpture**

"cut, carve or shape"

"action, process or result"

This makes sense because a **sculpture** is a work of art that has been carved or shaped.

Appreciating and reflecting



Hi! I'm **Aman**, an **art historian**. I study art from the past to learn **how people lived, what they believed, and what was important to them**.

Art helps us understand history.

Appreciating and reflecting means looking carefully at art and thinking about it. We notice details, ask questions, and think about what the art tells us about people's lives, beliefs, and culture.

Today, we will explore **pottery** from different cultures.

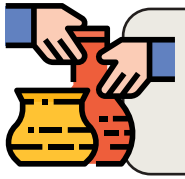




New word alert!

pottery – objects made from clay and baked to become hard, such as bowls or jars

Word detective



pottery – objects made from clay and baked to become hard, such as bowls or jars

The word '**pottery**' comes from Old French and relates to '**the condition of making pots or clay objects**'.



pot^{t} + er + y = pottery

"deep vessel or container" + "one who or something that" + "state, condition or quality"

This makes sense because the word **pottery** refers to objects made from clay, such as pots, bowls, and vases.

Pottery from the past

Appreciating and reflecting | Studying artists, movements and history | Understanding art's impact and culture



Pottery is one of the most useful things historians use to learn about the past. It lasts for thousands of years, even when other objects are gone. Pottery can come from ancient civilisations or from other times and places, not just from objects dug up in the ground.

By studying pottery, we can learn about:

- everyday life – what people cooked, stored, or traded
- beliefs – religion, rituals, and burials
- art and decoration – patterns, colours, and styles





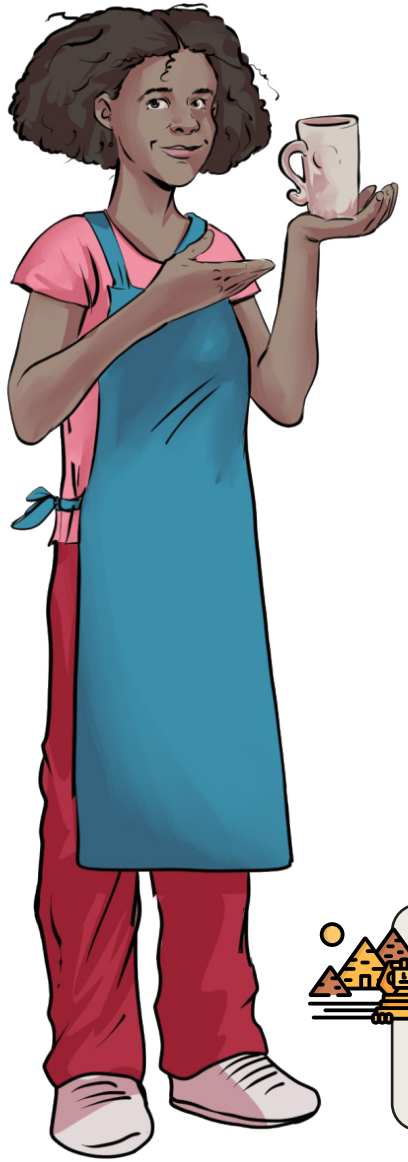




Ancient Egyptian pottery

Appreciating and reflecting

Studying artists, movements and history



Hello! I'm **Amara**, a **potter**.

The ancient Egyptians began making **pottery** over 6,000 years ago, using clay from the River Nile. They **shaped** pots by rolling clay into ropes and stacking them. They created **forms** with **low relief** (carving into the surface) and **high relief** (adding raised designs).

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Ancient Egyptian pottery needed **balance** to prevent tipping and **proportion** so the parts looked right together.

New word alert!

ancient Egyptians – a group of people from long ago who lived in Africa and were known for building pyramids and creating amazing art

Let's discuss

Appreciating and reflecting | Studying artists, movements and history | Understanding art's impact and culture

Discuss the following questions with your learning partner.

- **What do these objects remind you of?**
- **What do you think they might have been used for?**
- **Do you think they were important to the people who used them? Why?**
- **What questions do you have about these objects?**







Be ready to **share your feedback** with the class.

Use the following sentence starters to help you.

"They remind me of..."
"I think they might have been used for..."
"I think they were important because..."
"I wonder why/who/how..."

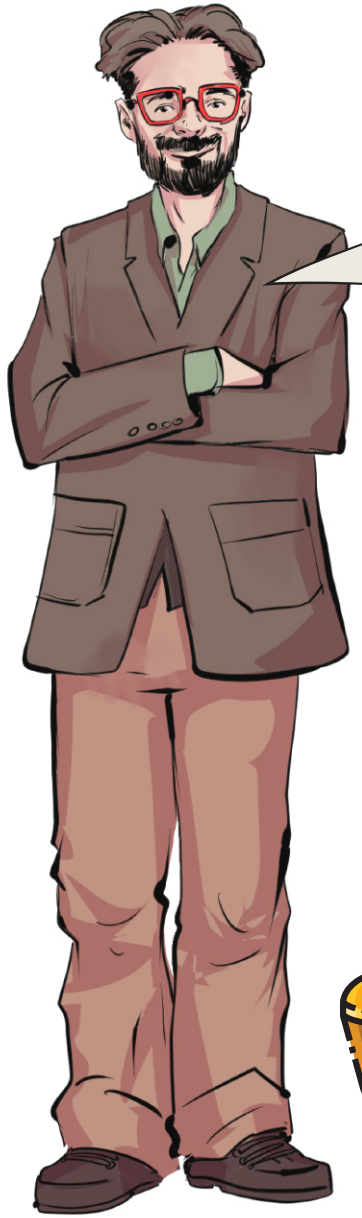
Let's discuss

answers

Appreciating and reflecting

Studying artists, movements and history

Understanding art's impact and culture



These are **canopic jars**.

The **ancient Egyptians** used them in mummification, a process in which they carefully preserved bodies after death.

They put organs in the jars to keep them safe for the afterlife.

The jars were often made of clay with lids **shaped** like people or animals.



New word alert!

canopic jar – a special jar used in ancient Egypt to hold parts of the body after someone died





The four Sons of Horus

Studying artists, movements and history

Some **canopic jar** lids showed the heads of the **four Sons of Horus**.
The animal heads are examples of **symbolism**. Each one stood for a god guarding an organ.

- **Imsety** had a human head and looked after the **liver**.
- **Hapy** had a baboon head and looked after the **lungs**.
- **Duamutef** had a jackal head and protected the **stomach**.
- **Qebehsenuef** had a falcon head and cared for the **intestines**.

How do I say these names?

Imsety – IM-set-ee
Hapy – HAP-ee
Duamutef – DOO-a-muh-tef
Qebehsenuef – Keb-eh-sen-oo-ef



Qebehsenuef of the west. Guardian of the intestines.



Hapy of the north. Guardian of the lungs.



Imseti of the south. Guardian of the liver.



Duamutef of the east. Guardian of the stomach.

Importance

Appreciating and reflecting

Understanding art's impact and culture



Pottery helps us learn about people from the past. For example, **canopic jars** show us that the **ancient Egyptians** believed in an afterlife and worshipped different gods.

Pottery from other cultures and time periods gives us clues about everyday life, beliefs, and art. We can discover how people lived all over the world at different times.



Activity



Appreciating and reflecting

Studying artists, movements and history

Recording inspirations and progress

Look at pictures of **pottery from different times and places** on your tables.

You will get clues about each picture on your **activity worksheet**, including what it is, when it was made, and where it is from.

Think about what you notice about each picture, what you think the pottery was used for and what it can tell us about people from the past. **Sketch each pottery and complete the sentences on your worksheet**.

Activity



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Pottery detective notes

Exhibit A

Clues:

It is a bottle.
It is from Peru, made by the Paracas people.
It was made around the 3rd–2nd century BCE (over 2,000 years ago).

My sketch:

I notice…

I think it was used for…

It tells us that people…

Let's share

Appreciating and reflecting



Great work today, everyone!

Discuss the following questions with your table group.

- **Which pottery example did you find most interesting? Why?**
- **What did the pottery tell you about people's everyday lives?**
- **How was the art or decoration on the pots different between cultures?**

Be ready to **share your feedback** with the class.

Use the following sentence starters to help you.

"I liked the…because…"
"_____ shows that people…"
"The decoration was different because…"

Be a great listener!

Ask **kind** and **curious questions**, such as:

"What did you find interesting or surprising?"
"Is there something you'd still like to find out?"

Challenge



Discuss the **following question** with your learning partner.

Which do you think gives historians more clues: **the shape of a pot or its decoration**?

Be ready to **share your feedback** with the class.

Use the following sentence starter to help you.

"I think the ___ gives more clues because …"



Challenge

answers



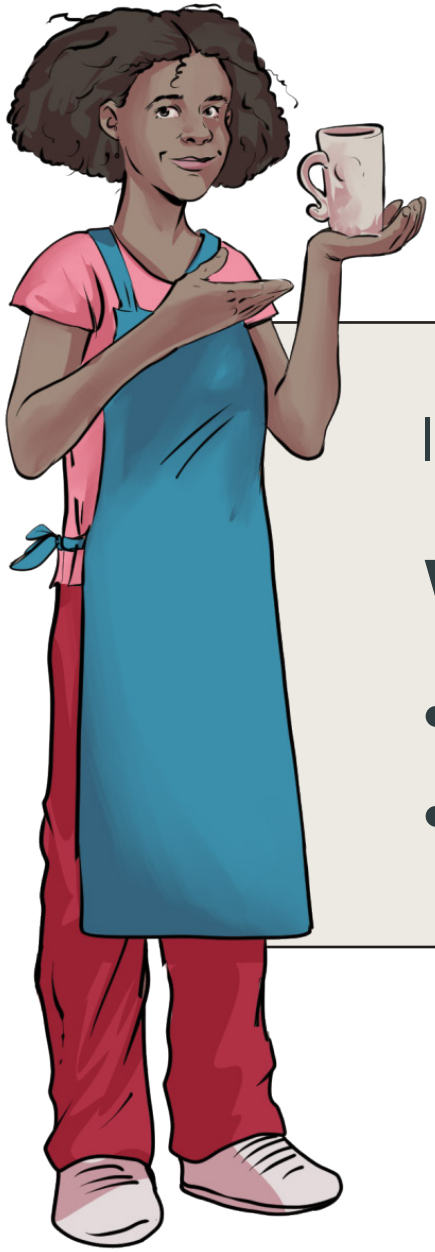
Decoration may offer more clues because it can show stories, beliefs, and culture.

But the shape also gives clues about how the pot was used, such as for cooking, storage, or religious ceremonies.

Both are important, but decoration might tell us more about people's ideas and beliefs.



Next time



In the next lesson, we will **start building canopic jars using clay**.

We will think about the following questions.

- How do I make sure my clay joins are strong?
- How can I keep my pot balanced and stable as I build it?