

LESSON PLAN 1: Incised Groove Vessel - Hunt Museum



**Irish,
2000-1700 BCE.**
This was funerary pottery from the Early Bronze Age; believed to have been filled with food and buried with the dead in order to sustain them on the journey to the next life.

*From the Collection
at the Hunt
Museum.*

Resources included in this lesson plan:

- 1** A short stop-motion video that:
 - Describes the incised groove vessel, what it was used for and how it was made
 - Describes the Early Bronze Age in Ireland and the role pottery played in learning about this time period
 - Demonstrates the shape and decoration of Bell Beaker pottery
 - Looks at a local archaeological site; Lough Gur, where similar pottery items were excavated
- 2** A short demonstration video of a local ceramic artist demonstrating how a coil pot vessel like this would have been made.
- 3** A short video of a teacher in a classroom delivering the coil pot lesson plan to the class, and the results.
- 4** What's the story? A looking and responding activity which included a list of questions and a printable broken pot shape.
- 5** A short instruction video on how to make slip, to complement the written instructions.
- 6** A short instruction video on how to score and add slip during the clay construction activity.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS ARE LEARNING:

- Basic construction processes used to make coil pots such as the incised groove vessel
- To use items from nature to emboss and print forms into the clay for decorative use
- Visual literacy skills to describe the patterns and shapes used in Bell Beaker pottery decoration

LEARNING OUTCOMES

STUDENTS WILL BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN THEY CAN:

- Apply new vocabulary to explain how early Bronze Age Bell Beaker vessels were made and decorated
- Describe what these vessels were used for
- Identify and talk about an archaeological site in their locality where pottery of this nature was found
- Produce a coil pot constructed with a base, and using scoring and slip to attach at least one coil; decorated with objects found in nature

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Visual Arts:

Strands:

Clay –

Developing form in clay.
Looking and responding.

Construction –

Making constructions

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education:

History:

Strands:

working as a historian, early people and ancient societies, life society work and culture in the past, continuity and change over time.

Geography:

Human Environments –

learning about early bronze age people and their interrelationships with the environment in Lough Gur Co. Limerick
Natural Environments – collection of items found in nature to use for embossing coil pots.

KEY SKILLS:

- Making slip
- Hand building



- Fusing clay strips together
- Embossing clay with found items from nature and around the house

MATERIALS FOR CLASS

- Air Dry Clay
- Clay Slip
- Acrylics or Poster Paints

TOOLS

- Objects from nature for mark making; twigs, sticks, acorns,
- Small lidded containers (strong yoghurt pots with lids)
- Zip lock bags
- Lollipop sticks
- Cocktail sticks
- Paint brushes
- Cutlery - forks / knives / old credit cards cut to sharp edge
- Plastic sheet to work on
- Containers for water
- Plastic mixing bowls
- Old newspapers and/or kitchen roll
- Twine



STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHER:

Coil pot constructed using a small bowl for support. Decorated with objects found in nature.

- Create a 'snake' roll of air dry clay by rolling with the palms of the hand on a flat surface.
- Use a rolling pin to flatten the clay coils slightly, approximately 6mm in width.
- Impress the clay with found objects from nature such as nuts, acorns, cones, small branches and leaves. The harder the object the sharper indent it will make on the clay. Glossy evergreen leaves such as laurel or bayleaf make a good impression.
- When the patterns are imprinted on the flattened clay coils you can begin to assemble the pot.
- Using a small plastic bowl, turn it upside down and use the outside as the support for the clay.
- Cut a circle of clay (round cookie cutter) roughly the same size as the base of the plastic bowl. Place the clay circle on the outer base.
- Use a fork or any item that can scratch or etch the edges of the clay piece, so that the clay slip (glue) can be brushed on. This creates traction when the coil piece is attached and makes it more secure.
- Cut a length of the clay coil, scratch the edge that will meet the outside edge of the clay circle. Apply slip and press the the pieces together, ensuring the embossed side faces outwards. Press together gently to ensure they are firmly attached.
- Repeat this process by applying more clay coils until you are happy with the size and shape of the pot
- Leave it sit on the bowl for support until you feel it is ready to stand on it's own without slumping

WHAT'S THE STORY? TELLING THE STORY OF THE OBJECT...

INFORMATION ABOUT ACTIVITY:

1. What's the story? Looking and responding activity.

Pupils to use broken pot pieces to write answers to questions provided. Use these to create a story map pot on a wall or desk. Question the object/deconstruct meaning/come up with research questions about it. Pupils may decorate their shapes as they wish to make a colourful Bronze Age story-pot.



LOOKING AND RESPONDING:

QUESTIONS

- How old are you?
- Where do you come from?
- Who made you?
- How were you made?
- Why were you made?
- Are you important?
- Who used you?
- What were you used for?
- How are you used now?
- Why have you been kept this long?
- Why do you live in the Hunt Museum now?
- Are you beautiful?
- How are you decorated?
- Are you part of a set?
- What sort of things lived around you?
- What sort of things live around you now?

TEACHERS NOTES:

Looking and Responding:

- **How old are you?** *Comprehension of the information from the lesson*
- **Where do you come from?** *Understanding maps shown and information from the lesson*
- **Who made you?** *Comprehension from the lesson, using detective skills to consider who in society was the maker of the piece under discussion*
- **How were you made?** *Answers to include new vocabulary to describe ceramic processes*

- **Why were you made?** *Be able to describe the purpose of the object based on information from the lesson, using detective skills and imagination to describe why this object was made*
- **Are you important?** *Pupils to discuss if/why the object is important, why and to whom*
- **Who used you?** *Using detective skills and information for the lesson to describe this person*
- **What were you used for?** *Using information from the lesson and detective skills to describe the object's use*
- **How are you used now?** *Understanding the importance of being on display in a museum/Gallery, using their imagination*
- **Why have you been kept this long?** *Using their imagination and detective skills to consider how much care it takes to preserve fragile items for 1000s of years*
- **Why do you live in the Hunt Museum/Limerick Museum/LCGA?** *Considering/discussing why objects are kept on display and why*
- **Are you beautiful?** *Observing the objects carefully. How long did it take to make? Does it look nice? Would you have this in your house?*
- **How are you decorated?** *Observing carefully. What processes have been described in the videos. Use new vocabulary to answer this*
- **What sort of things lived around you?** *Using knowledge of context of the piece describe other objects/people/places around the object. If it was kept on a shelf; what was beside it on the shelf. Was it on the ground? In a house or some other building?*
- **What sort of things live around you now?** *Using imagination and knowledge of context around the object, describe what lives next to this object now. Are they the same things as 2000 years ago?*



TO MAKE AIR DRY CLAY SLIP (SLURRY)

- Shred small pieces of fresh air dry clay - a small cupful, and place in a plastic bowl
- Add approx 2/3 tablespoons of water and leave overnight with a tight lid
- Next day stir gently adding more water if needed. Let it sit for 24 hours, with the lid on
- After at least 48 hours, the mixture can be repeatedly stirred to create a smooth creamy texture
- This is now ready to be used as a 'glue' to bind air dry clay sections together
- If colour is required, divide the mixture equally into 3/4 separate lidded pots, depending on how many colours are needed
- Add either poster paint or acrylic paint to each pot in very small amounts at first. Stir well until the colour emerges. The more colour that is added, the brighter and deeper the tone will be
- Colours can be mixed together as well, such as blue and yellow to make green. Small colour tests are advised before adding to the slip



