

## Ceramics Badge

(written by Doreen Olson)



### **Otters: choose four requirements, including any starred ones.**

\*1. While this badge deals mostly with ceramics called pottery and the things a person would study in a ceramics art class, it is important to know that ceramics are used for a lot of other things. Find ten different things made from ceramics in your house or neighborhood: dinnerware; glassware; spark plugs; bricks; floor tiles; electronic circuits; cement; porcelain toilets, sinks or bathtubs; windows; light bulbs; lenses; roof tiles & drain pipes; and abrasives/grinding materials.

\*2. Find a book or website that explains the three main techniques used to hand build ceramics (pinch, coil & slab) and if you cannot practice them with actual clay, practice making things using at least two of the methods with some type of play dough.

3. Go to a ceramics studio and apply a glaze to a piece of pottery or watch someone else do it.

4. Find a kiln you can look at and try to arrange to be present when a potter takes her wares out of the kiln. Find at least two different types of kilns to visit or look at in photos.

5. Find a book or website that lists helpful tools for potters. Which ones are used for making surface designs in the clay? Find a potter's wheel to look at and if you cannot watch someone using it, find photos or a movie to watch.

6. Visit a craft fair, ceramic studio, or museum and count the different shapes of items made of pottery. How many different surface designs can you find? How many different colors of glazes?

### **Dolphins: choose five requirements, including those starred.**

\*1. Learn about the history of ceramics by reading a book, reading a website such as [www.depauw.edu/acad/art/faculty/dherroldweb/pages/histpl.html](http://www.depauw.edu/acad/art/faculty/dherroldweb/pages/histpl.html) or visiting a museum with a large collection of pottery. If you visit the museum, either the history of pottery in general or a detailed history of pottery in just one culture is fine.

\*2. Learn about the three main techniques for hand building ceramics (pinch, coil & slab) and if you cannot practice them with actual clay, practice making things with play dough using all three techniques. Air dry one of your pieces to see how it turns out. How well did it work? Should you do something different in the future?

3. Go to a ceramics studio and apply a glaze to a piece of pottery. How does the appearance change after going through the kiln?

4. Find a kiln to visit and try to arrange to be there when a potter takes her wares out. What are the most common types of kilns and what types of fuel do they use?

5. Find a book or website that lists helpful tools for potters. Find out the use for each of at least five tools. Practice using some of them on clay or play dough. Observe how a potter's wheel works. Look at a minimum of five pieces of pottery that were made on a wheel.

6. Visit a craft fair, ceramics studio, or museum and try to determine which method was used in making the various pieces. If you go to a craft fair or a studio, check with the potter(s) to see how accurate your guessing is. Ask the artist how long it took to make each piece. If you divide the price of a piece by the

number of hours it took to make it, how much is the potter getting per hour?

7. Learn the ceramics definition of these words: throw, fire, slip, earthenware, stoneware, porcelain, wedging, and reducing.

**Butterflies: Choose six of the following requirements, including those starred.**

\*1. If this is your first time doing the Ceramics Badge, do Otter #1 and Dolphin #1. If you are repeating this badge, find a different requirement to do.

\*2. Practice the pinch, coil & slab methods of hand building ceramics with either clay or play dough. Make at least one article out of clay using one of these methods and have it fired. If your article breaks or you haven't mastered that particular technique, make a second piece. If you don't apply a glaze to your piece, then you need to decorate the surface in another fashion.

3. Go to a ceramics studio or demonstration to observe various ways of decorating pottery. Observe glaze being applied (or practice it yourself) in more than one way: by pouring, dipping, or with a brush. Experiment with or observe someone else using either impressed decorations or carving a leather-hard piece.

4. Visit a kiln and observe or help load or unload a kiln. What are the things a person needs to be aware of in loading a kiln? What temperatures are used for different types of pottery? Are some things fired more than once?

5. Try your hand at making a pot by throwing. Find out some things that can go wrong while a piece is being thrown. How can they be prevented? How does a potter combine more than one shape in a piece?

6. Do Dolphin #6. Price at least three potter's tools or supplies such as clay, glaze, trimming and modeling tools, or cutting wire.

7. Learn the definitions in Dolphin #7 plus the following: kaolin, bentonite, raku, mishima, majolica, sgraffito, crackle.

8. Make at least one article out of clay using a hand building method not used in #2 and have it fired. If your article is ruined in some way or you haven't mastered that particular technique, make a second piece using the same technique. If you don't apply glaze to the piece, decorate it in another way. This requirement can be repeated a second time so that you have mastered all three hand building techniques.

9. Spend at least two hours helping an artists' association with a fundraiser or charitable project that includes something related to ceramics or sell some pieces of your pottery and donate the money.

**Eagles: Do seven requirements including those starred.**

\*1. If this is the first time you are earning this badge, do Otter #1 and Dolphin #1. Discuss with someone who uses ceramics (such as those listed in Otter #1) in the workplace the importance of those ceramics. If you are repeating this badge, research one of the following: glaze recipes, the history of pottery on a particular continent, pyrometric cones, or the chemistry of firing.

\*2. If this is your first time earning the badge, do Butterfly #2. If you are repeating it, you need to complete one article made by each of the three hand building methods: pinch, coil & slab.

3. Go to a ceramics studio or demonstration to observe various ways of decorating pottery. Observe glaze being applied (or practice it yourself) in more than one way: pouring, dipping, or with a brush. Experiment

with or observe someone else using either impressed decorations or carving a leather-hard piece.

4. Visit a kiln and observe or help load or unload a kiln. What are the things a person needs to be aware of in loading a kiln? What temperatures are used for different types of pottery? Are some things fired more than once? Find out how much it costs each time the kiln is used.
5. Make a piece of pottery using a wheel. Remove the piece from the wheel yourself. Find out what a bat is and observe someone using one or try throwing an open shape that requires a bat.
6. If you did not do Butterfly # 6 previously, you may do it now.
7. If you did not do Butterfly #7 previously, you may do it now.
8. Make a second series of three pieces, each using a different hand building method as in #2, but decorate them differently unless you are trying to make a large set of matching pottery.
9. Same as Butterfly #9.
10. Make a piece of pottery by any method and make a well-fitting lid for it.
11. Make a piece of pottery that combines more than one shape, such as a goblet or teapot.
12. Make a piece of pottery with handles, a pierced design, or with decorations made from added pieces of clay (sprigs). Your chosen variation can be used on pieces that also count for #8 or #10.
13. After touring a home or business that used several different styles of floor or kitchen tiles, try making a series of coordinated tiles or slabs to be used as stepping stones, trivets, or some other part of home or yard décor.
14. Try making a piece of hollow molded pottery by pouring slip into a mold, or watch someone else do it. You will need to observe this on more than one occasion in order to see the entire process.