

Clay Recipes

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Note to Teachers: The clay projects will require two class days to complete due to necessary drying time for the clay.

There are numerous homemade clays to work with. Many require cooking and baking. These recipes can be made in the classroom without cooking. Some recipes have the option to be baked but will air dry into a solid form.

Sawdust Clay:

This recipe is my preferred air drying clay that creates a unique and sturdy final piece.

2/3 cup sawdust*

1/3 cup flour

1/8-1/4 cup water

Containers for mixing - large margarine tubs or bowls work well.

Wooden spoons - for mixing. sticks, even pencils will work.

This will make enough clay for one person.

Mix the sawdust and flour together in the container. Add the water mixing, with the wooden spoon, till it reaches a stiff and squishy consistency. If it is crumbly then add a little flour. Knead the clay, like making bread, on the table top. Cover with newspaper if the table top needs to be kept clean. Or sprinkle the surface with a little flour or cornstarch to keep the clay from sticking. The kneading process will cause the gluten in the flour to become elastic holding the sawdust together. Knead the clay till it is elastic and easy to shape. About 5 minutes.

This clay sun-dries very hard with a rough texture. It can be dried in the classroom preferable by a sunny window. Allow 3-4 days to dry, maybe a little longer depending on humidity level. Do not allow the pieces to re-moisten during the drying process as this will cause them to mold. Pieces can also be slow baked at 200 degree oven. Bake till hard but beware... it leaves a funny odor.

When dry it can be sanded with a rough texture sandpaper. The easiest sanding method for children is to hold the sandpaper on the table with one hand and rub the pot on the paper. The clay can be finished off with acrylic or tempre paints and sprayed with an acrylic sealer to make it glossy.

*A local wood construction facility, or sawmills will have piles of available sawdust. The final texture will depend on the fineness of the sawdust. You can sift sawdust through a mesh screen.

Simplify Prep: Pre bag the sawdust and flour into ziploc bags for each student. To reduce the possibilities of a mess, the teacher should measure out the water for each student.