



Prehistoric pots



30 minutes



- Air-drying clay, or other modelling material (e.g. Plasticine)
- A bowl of water per table
- Circular cookie cutter approx. 8-10cm diameter
- Large rolling pin
- Lolly sticks, cocktail sticks or other pattern-making tools
- Protective sheets or covers for tables



Please be aware that this activity may not be suitable for children with allergies or skin conditions. Please consult your school's own health and safety policy before conducting this activity.



The prehistoric people at Hinxton would have used pots like we do today, for storing food and supplies. Although the pots were designed for a function, prehistoric people liked to decorate them with patterns and designs, much like we do today. Archaeologists are learning about the lives of prehistoric people by looking at the things they left behind. Different pottery designs help us to tell how old things are and where they might have come from. Some designs are found in particular places, so we can ask whether people travelled, or whether they traded with other people.



1. Before the activity begins roll out the clay and cut out circular bases for each child. Follow the clay package instructions for how to prepare and use the clay. Portion out enough clay per child to make the pot's sides (approximately a large fist should be enough).
2. Explain to the children that they are going to be prehistoric people, like those at Hinxton, making a new pot. Ask them to think about what they might use it for. How strong is it? What sort of design should they use?
3. Give each pupil their circular base and modelling clay. Get them to work up a sausage shape and start twisting it round their base. Once they have made one layer they need to dab a finger in water and rub it across the top of the layer to act like glue for the next one on top of it.
4. Once they have twirled their clay sausage all the way round, they need to dab their fingers in the water and smooth out the sides so that they don't look like sausages any more. Then, using lolly or cocktail sticks encourage them to think about how to decorate their pot. Prehistoric people often used repeated, geometric patterns. What will they choose?
5. When the pots are completed leave them to dry following the pack instructions. You could then display some of your pots as part of your class display!