

Leach Pottery

Teacher's Resource Pack



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Introduction

The Leach Pottery is considered by many to be the birthplace of British studio pottery. One of the great figures of 20th century art, Bernard Leach played a crucial pioneering role in creating an identity for artist potters across the world.

A visit to the Leach Pottery offers students the unique chance to explore the daily life and local history of the potters who lived and worked here, see today's skilled studio apprentices in action, and even have a go themselves!

The restored Leach Pottery site includes a museum, exhibition, gallery and shop with regular shows throughout the year showcasing work by leading regional, national and international studio potters.

This resource is designed to support exploration of the pottery in alignment with national curriculum standards.



Three thematic threads run through the activities:

- **Exploring Materials and Process**
Maths, Science, English, Arts & Design
- **The Legacy of Leach**
Arts & Design, Technology, Geography, History, English
- **The Evolution of Design**
History, Arts & Design, English

The Leach Pottery offers self-guided visits, museum tours, and hand-on workshops across all Key Stages.

Pupils on self-guided visits can explore the old pottery with its original kilns and equipment as well as the new galleries and exhibition area.

Museum-led visits include practical hands-on activities such as making a coil pot or tile, sketching and a tour of the museum including watching pots being made on the wheel and can be tailored to meet the needs of your program.

All visits provide the basis for cross-curricular projects, incorporating elements of heritage, geography, science, literacy, maths, local history, and art & design.

We can also arrange bespoke tours and activities- please contact us for more details.

Free with entry to the museum

Special Exhibitions & Displays

We have changing exhibitions in our entrance and Cube Galleries - please see our website for details.

Other Resources for Schools

We can support **Arts Award Activities** and occasionally offer **sessions for teachers**. Please check the website for details of upcoming events or contact us about arranging a visit.

Resource Library

The pottery's comprehensive library of rare, current, and historical books on ceramics making, theory, and history is available for use on site

Self-Guided Tours

Entry to Museum Only

Maximum of 32 students **with accompanying adults. Pre-booking required.** A typical visit lasts between 1 to 2 hours, including an optional 32-minute film.

We recommend that you make a preparatory visit before bringing your class. Use the curriculum resources included in this guide to make the most of your visit.

Cost: Groups with fewer than ten students are free
Larger groups charged at £3 per head (1 adult free per 5 children)

Museum-Led Tours & Workshops

Entry to the Museum with Guided Tour

One-hour tour for a maximum of 32 students
Pre-booking required

Cost: £4 per head (1 adult free per 5 children)

Entry to the Museum with Guided Tour and Throwing Demonstration

One-hour tour and demonstration for a maximum of 32 students

Pre-booking required

Cost: £5 per head (1 adult free per 5 children)

Full Education Workshop

Entry to the museum with one-hour museum tour and one-hour making activity for a maximum of 32 students. **Pre-booking required.**

Example schedule:

(Groups larger than 15 divide into two smaller groups and alternate activities)

10:00	Arrival and welcome
10:05- 10:55	Guided tour of the museum and, if possible, a throwing demonstration on a Bernard Leach Kick Wheel
11:00 - 11:55	Hands-on pottery workshop in our education studio
12:00	Finish and further time for independent exploration

Cost: £135 for smaller groups up to 15 students
£165 for large groups 15 to 32 students
10% discount for Cornish schools

Firing: This is charged as an optional extra. Work is returned at a later date. *Prices below are estimates and can vary on based work produced and group sizes.*

£25 for **bisque firing only** up to 15 students

£40 for **bisque firing only** up to 32 students

£40 for **bisque and glaze firing** up to 15 students

£60 for **bisque and glaze firing** up to 32 students

£20 Postage and packing (up to 20kg)



Raku Firing Workshop for Schools and Colleges

Entry to the museum with two-hour glaze and firing workshop for a maximum of 20 students

Pre-booking required

Example schedule:

- 10:00 Arrival and short introduction to raku firing
Glaze and decoration demonstration
Students glaze a pre-thrown bisque-fired bowl
- 10:45 Load kiln with first pots* and fire up
- 11:00 Visit the Museum
- 11:45 Watch kiln opening and sawdust reduction
- 12:15 Finish and further time for independent exploration

***Please note:** Due to the size of the raku kiln, each firing takes a maximum of 10 pots. The first 10 will be fired during the workshop. The rest will be fired by our team after and can be collected at the end of the day.

Cost:

£135 for group of up to 10 people + £5 per head
£165 for group of up to 20 people + £5 per head
Per head charge includes pre-thrown bowl and firing costs.
10% discount for Cornish schools

Bespoke Tours and Activities

We can provide guidance for **school and community murals and other clay projects**, or work with you to tailor an educational program to meet your needs.

Cost: Arranged on an individual basis determined by the needs of the activity, required outcomes, number of participants, and materials and firing costs. Please contact us for more information.



Planning & Booking Your Visit

To book:

- 1) **Complete a booking form and return it to education@leachpottery.com with full details (form downloadable from the learning section of our website).**
- 2) **An invoice will then be sent to the school to be paid in full prior to arrival. Or pay a deposit on our website with the balance to be invoiced nearer the time.**

Enquiries:

For enquiries please contact Learning & Participation Officers at 01736 799 703 (please leave a message) or email education@leachpottery.com

Facilities

Lunch: There are four outdoor picnic tables available, however there is no food available for purchase on site.

Coat/bag storage: We have very limited coat and bag storage and there are no secure lockers available. Please do not bring any baggage or valuables.

Library: Groups with fewer than ten students can access the resource room at no extra charge. There is a large table and projector. **Pre-booking Required.** Please enquire for guidelines and restrictions.

Cancellations

All cancellations must be sent in writing. Cancellations received 28 days or more before the visit: payment will be refunded in full. Cancellations received within 28 days of the visit: payments are non-refundable. The Leach Pottery reserves the right to cancel any visit at short notice. In this unlikely event you will be notified as soon as possible. You can choose another date to transfer to at no extra charge, or receive a full refund for any payments made.

Photography

Photography for personal use is allowed inside the museum. Please be respectful of other visitors. Photographic consent forms will be provided if necessary prior to your visit.

Access

All public areas are accessible to wheel chairs, pushchairs, and people with limited mobility with a ramp for entrance into the shop. There are two steps between the clay and glaze areas in the old pottery but both areas are accessible via alternative routes.

Wheelchair-friendly toilets are situated in the museum entrance space with baby change facilities. There is a wheel-chair friendly lift for access from the old museum to the newer part of the site where the Cube Gallery is situated.

Getting Here

The Leach Pottery is located on the B3306 on the upper outskirts of the town of St Ives, Cornwall.

From the A30: Follow the brown signs for Tate St Ives. At the Penzance/Zennor junction on the B3306 continue following the road down towards St Ives. The Leach Pottery is on the right, after the fire Station.

From St Ives town centre: Follow the main road up the hill from Royal Square. *Two minutes by car/bus or a twenty-minute walk from the rail station.*

Parking

There is limited car parking at the Leach Pottery site including Disabled Parking bays.

Coach Parking: Limited coach parking is available across the street from the pottery. **Call ahead to reserve a space.** St Ives Coach Park, Higher Stennack: 07933 326 425

Public car parks:

In the summer the coach park across the street serves as overflow parking and operates buses into town.

Trenwith Pay & Display Car Park next to St Ives Leisure Centre, approximately 6 minutes' walk from the Pottery. (TR26 1DD)

St Ives Rugby Club approximately 5 minutes' walk from the Pottery. (TR26 1ER)



Top Ten Reasons to Visit The Leach Pottery With Students:

1 Feel history come alive

Sit at the fireplace where generations of students have gathered to learn. Engage all your senses: hear the quiet rhythms of the kick wheel, smell the damp clay in the air, feel the weight of ware in your hands...

2 An immersive clay experience

Learn about the processes, techniques, and ideas while working on your own clay project

3 Marvel at the kiln

In 1923 the Pottery became the site of the first Japanese climbing kiln built in the west and it is now a listed monument

4 Sketching in the gallery

There's no substitute for first hand observation and with a series of changing exhibitions exploring a wide range of topics there's always something new to discover

5 See a modern studio busy with potters at work

Peek in and the work unfold as you consider the career and livelihood of the contemporary studio potter

7 Join in the community

The Pottery has been at the centre of a growing community of makers, artisans, collectors for almost one hundred years. Find out how to get involved

6 Read a good book

The library offers a unique and extensive collection of rare, current, and historical books for use on site

8 Innovative tools and technologies

See the actual tools used by the Leach pottery team and the revolutionary kick wheel design invented and made here in St. Ives

9 Explore international ties

Discover a story of lifelong friendship, cooperation and a fusion of traditions from east & west

10 Uncover a movement

Bernard Leach was one of the most influential writers of the modern studio pottery movement. Compare the philosophy to the reality in the place where his ideas were first put into practice

Key Areas of the Site

“A friendly and inviting atmosphere in the rooms where pots are thrown and decorated, good lighting, reasonable orderliness and quiet, the tools and furnishings attractive in themselves, however simple, and a few specimens of first-rate pots against light toned walls make all the difference to the mood in which work is done”

Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Book*, 1940



Reception and Entrance Gallery

Where you can see a display of 20th Century pottery from our permanent collection alongside contemporary selling exhibitions by leading UK and international potters.



Clay Room

Where clay was prepared and recycled. Note the clay mixers, the pug machine used for creating plugs of clay for use on the wheel, and bins for powdered clay and glazes.



Wheel Room

Designed by David Leach and Dicon Nance, the Leach 'kick wheel' is driven by the potter's foot via a fly wheel, and provides steady momentum to the throwing surface. Still used today by our production team.



Glazing Area

Where pots were decorated and glazed including the fireplace where Bernard used to hold impromptu debates on the nature of pottery. Up to 8 people would work in here.



Kiln Room

At one time open-sided to the south, this room houses the climbing kiln, built in 1923, which was the first in the Western world and was in use until the 1970s.



Cube Gallery

This display space holds a wide range of exhibitions that change throughout the year.



Shop

The ground floor of the old pottery cottage has been converted into a showcase for the work of more than sixty potters and the Leach Standard ware.



Clore Education Studio

Learning and Participation's workshop space for visiting groups, night classes and masterclasses.



Library

Housing Leach Pottery's books and the collections of Emmanuel Cooper and Mary Wondrausch for use on-site.

Pre-Visit Activities

Explore the **Additional Resources**, including visual resources, a detailed history and further online games and sources.

Vocabulary Banks are a great way to introduce unfamiliar words. You might want to define them before you come or assign students in small groups to discover them during their visit. Below are some words that might be unfamiliar to students:

Key Stage 1 & 2:

Potter
Pottery
Clay
Pottery Wheel
Kiln
Firing

Key Stage 3 & 4:

Historical terms:

Studio Pottery
Mingei Movement
Arts & Crafts
English Slipware
Maker's Mark

Equipment & materials:

Kick wheel
Press mould
Earthenware
Porcelain
Stoneware
Pug mill
Climbing Kiln
Gas Kiln
Soda Kiln

Descriptive words for pots:

Volume
Space
Form
Surface Texture
Decoration
Motif

Ceramic Processes:

Pinch
Slab
Coil
Plasticity
Wedging
Throwing
Greenware
Leather hard
Bone dry
Bisque firing
Glaze firing
Vitrification

What is pottery?

Class discussion

20 minutes

National Curriculum:

English: use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas

Science: identifying and classifying; using their observations and ideas to suggest answers to questions; distinguish between an object and the material from which it is made; identify and name a variety of everyday materials; compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of their simple physical properties

Materials needed: Objects of various materials (clay (china or porcelain is ok), wood, glass, metal etc). Parents and charity shops can be a good source for these items; small piece of wet clay (optional).

Key Questions: What makes clay different from other materials? Who is a potter and what is a pottery? Where have they experienced pottery in their own lives?

Learning Objectives: Students can identify objects which might be made from clay. Students can identify these objects using the new vocabulary words.

Activity:

- 1) Bring in a variety of cups, plates, vases etc. made of different materials. Allow students time to examine them, and ask them to sort them into different categories. These could include function (what they are used for), how they look, or any other ideas the children have. Ask students to share where they have seen objects like these being used. If necessary guide the group to identify the objects made of clay and come up with some words that describe how this material is different from the rest.
- 2) Write down the student's observations on the board. Don't worry at this point if their definition shares qualities with the other objects (hard, smooth, heavy) etc. Finally, add that all these objects share a special quality: they are made of clay!
- 3) Pass around a small ball of soft clay and allow students to handle it. Introduce the idea that clay is something that people have been using for a very long time because it can be made into any shape when it's soft. When it is 'cooked' in a kind of oven just for clay called a kiln, it becomes hard and lasts a long time. This is called 'firing'.
- 4) When this happens, things made from clay become pottery. The people who make things out of clay are called potters. They will be going to a place called a pottery (optional: where they will get a chance to be potters for a day and make their own pottery out of clay.)

Extension: Watch the BBC Bitesize video 'Proud to be a Potter' at

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zs497hv>

This is an excellent introduction to the history of pottery and the job of a potter targeted to KS1-2. 5 minutes.

Where does clay come from?

Guided drawing

30 minutes

National Curriculum:

Science: compare and group together different kinds of rocks on the basis of their appearance and simple physical properties; explain that some changes result in the formation of new materials, and that this kind of change is not usually reversible, including the action of acid

Geography: develop contextual knowledge of globally significant places—including their defining physical and human characteristics and how these provide a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes; use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key physical features; describe and understand key aspects of physical geography

Materials needed: Paper (or sketchbook page) for each student, large sheet of craft paper or a whiteboard. A raw piece of clay (optional).

Optional:

Project Pottery's detailed chemical explanation:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O2R_LqDljI

Follow the process in North Carolina:

Real Dirt About Clay | NC Science Now | UNC-

TV [https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6h12dvkruHQ)

[v=6h12dvkruHQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6h12dvkruHQ)

Key Questions: What is clay and where does it come from? How does the origin of clay give it its unique properties?

Learning Objectives: Students will draw the physical geological and geographic process of the formation of clay. Students will be able to identify three different kinds of clay and where they might be found.

Activity:

- 1) Begin by trying to write a definition of clay as a class. Typically, students will be able to identify clay as a kind of mud or dirt. If not, guide students to this by sharing or asking about their experience of playing in the mud. See how many types of 'dirt' or descriptions the students can think of. (sand, garden soil, dust, etc) If you have a raw piece of clay, hand it around and discuss what makes clay different from these other types of dirt (i.e. It is slippery and sticks together when wet, it dries hard, it can be rolled into worms, flattened into pancakes etc.) Tell the students that clay has these special properties because of how it is made and where it comes from.
- 2) Each student should create their own drawing along with you as you narrate the story of clay. Make sure to tell them that they will get time to add all the details they want to their drawing at the end. Monitor the pace to allow students to finish each section before moving on.
- 3) Sequence of the drawing. Items in brackets indicate a more advanced explanation.
 - a. Draw several mountains in one corner. This is where the story of clay begins, as a volcanic rock called granite, high up in the mountains.
 - a. Draw snowflakes and streaks of wind above the mountains. Freezing and other physical processes help to break the rocks apart. [This is called mechanical weathering] If you've ever looked at a granite countertop or sculpture, you know it's made up of lots of small crystal grains. The larger white chunks are a mineral called feldspar, which goes on to become clay.
 - b. [Draw several dots on your mountains. The presence of water and other chemical reactions in the environment also helps to make the tiny, tiny flakes of eroded rock that make up clay. This is called chemical weathering and is an important part of the process on a microscopic level.]
 - c. Draw a large circle at the base of the mountains. The erosion of the rocks keeps happening until it builds up a

deposit of pure, *primary clay* that is very light in colour and hardens at very high temperatures. One of the most famous places where this happened is in Cornwall near St. Austell and it is where we get our porcelain clay from.

- d. Draw a river flowing down from the mountain. This is how the clay gets out of the mountains.
- e. Draw a second circle below and along the river. The tiny flakes of weathered rock are washed out of the mountains and settle into deposits of *secondary clay* downriver.
- f. Draw a few arrows that flow down the river through the first circle deposit and into the second. As it flows, along with the clay the river picks up other minerals like sand and iron and mixes them together with the clay. This creates stoneware clay. Stoneware is usually tan coloured, and fires at medium temperatures. The stoneware used at the Leach pottery is mined near St. Agnes in Cornwall.
- g. At the end of the river, draw several streams branching out. In the wetlands, the clay mixes with organic material and even more minerals, and is exposed to water. [And further chemical reactions] This turns it into *tertiary clay*, or earthenware. This is usually a very dark red or brown colour because of all of the different minerals [oxides] and can be fired at relatively low temperatures, even without a kiln. When Leach and Hamada first started the pottery, they were getting earthenware clay from St. Erth in Cornwall.
- h. Before the clay is used for pottery, it is often mixed with other ingredients (feldspar, ball clay, bentonite, grog etc.) depending on how the potter wants to use it. This turns the clay into what we call a *clay body*.

do they notice about the geology of Cornwall? Where else might they expect to find clay? The geological process that makes clay takes a very long time, and sometimes clay deposits can help geologists to understand how the earth has changed. In fact, looking at the differences in clay mineral content of buried clay soils helps geologists to understand ancient climates!

Research some of the other important clay deposits in England and around the world, particularly near Stoke-on-Trent and Jingdezhen, China.

S.J. Howe's article 'Geology of the Lizard' explores more about the clay found in that part of Cornwall. It can be found in the Leach library, in issue 76 of *Ceramic Review* from 1982.

You can also visit the Wheal Martyn China Clay Museum near St. Austell to learn more about the industrial mining of primary clay.

<https://www.wheal-martyn.com>

Extension: Find the locations of the clay sources for the pottery on a topographic or geologic map. What

How do you make a mug?

30 minutes

National Curriculum:

Mathematics: Sequence events in chronological order using language; compare durations of events;

Science: explain that some changes result in the formation of new materials, and that this kind of change is not usually reversible, including changes associated with burning; identifying differences, similarities or changes related to simple scientific ideas and processes

Materials needed: One set of Clay Process Cards for each group. Cards can be cut apart, laminated, and put on a key ring to bring to the pottery.

Key Questions: How long does it take to make one thing out of clay? What has to happen to turn clay into pottery?

Learning Objectives: Students can think logically about process and sequence. Students will understand how clay is transformed from a natural material to a finished product.

Activity:

- 1) Depending on the level of the students, it may be necessary to have a quick review of what clay is. Ask them if they know where it comes from and how it is made.
- 2) Pass out one set of cards for each group. Ask them to out the cards in an order that describes what happens to clay as it turns into a piece of thrown pottery. For example, before you can make something, you first must find and dig the clay. Point out there are hints on the back of the cards.
- 3) In small groups, give students time to organize their cards, circulating and asking questions about their decision-making process.
- 4) As a class, decide on the final order. The cards can be arranged on a wall with a bit of sticky tape on the back.
- 5) Ask students to add up how long they think the whole process takes. Ask leading questions as needed (For example, how many days do you think it would take to dig enough clay for one mug? For one hundred mugs? Do they have to travel to the site to find the clay?)
- 6) Explain that while *now* we know a lot about how to make a mug, when Bernard Leach started the pottery in St. Ives, there were very few people in England who knew how to do this by themselves, without a factory. He learned some of it from potters in Japan, but he and his students had to work very hard to figure it out by doing lots of experiments. This is one of the reasons why the pottery is such an important place. People came from all over the world to learn at the pottery.

For more advanced students this can be used to explore the valuation of clay mugs they will see in the pottery based on the amount of work required and for a discussion of scale of industrial production in making everyday objects. What might be some of the reasons why a potter might want to make their own clay? There are several videos exploring this process on an industrial scale available online. How It's Made Clay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXD9zDs9ygU>

During your visit to the pottery, ask students to identify and match the processes in the studio to the cards. These can also be used to review student's understanding of the process.



Digging up the clay



Processing the clay



Wedging



Throwing the mug



Turning



Adding a handle

Digging up the clay:

Clay is mostly made from very old, broken down rock. It has to be mined from the ground and delivered to the pottery. It takes a very special kind of earth to make clay.

Processing the clay:

Before it can be used, the clay has to be cleaned. This is done by drying the clay, crushing it up, sifting out any bits that don't belong, and mixing it with water. Special machines are used to help the potter do this.

Wedging:

The raw clay has to be kneaded like bread dough to get it ready. This mixes the clay, makes it easier to work with, and pushes out any air bubbles that might explode in the kiln.

Throwing the mug:

While many potters use molds, or form the clay with their hands, this mug is made on a pottery wheel. The potter raises the lump of clay into the right shape while it spins. This takes a lot of practice!

Turning:

Once the mug is the right shape, it is allowed to dry for a day (this is called being '**leather hard**') before any extra clay from throwing is cut away from the base to make the final shape.

Adding a handle:

After the mug has its final shape, the potter can add a handle. Usually this is done by attaching a lump of wet clay and **pulling** it into a handle. A potter will work on many mugs in different stages at the same time.



Drying the greenware



Bisque firing



Glazing



Glaze firing



Selling the mug



Enjoying your tea!

Drying the Greenware:

Before clay is fired, it is called 'greenware'. The mug has to be as dry as possible before it can go in the kiln. It might take a few days for the mug to become 'bone dry.'

Bisque Firing:

A mug is usually fired twice. The first time it is only heated halfway, but it still takes all day! This makes the pots easier to glaze and starts the chemical process that changes wet clay into pottery.

Glazing:

The mug is dipped in glaze, a liquid mixture of smooth glass that coats the clay and helps make it more waterproof, easier to clean, and adds colour and decoration to the mug.

Glaze Firing:

The final heating for this mug is 1280 degrees Celsius. That's as hot as lava! It takes between 8-12 hours to melt the glaze that was put on and finish the mug.

Selling the mug:

Many potters sell their work through galleries or in shops.

Enjoying your tea:

The best part of having a handmade mug is thinking of all the experiences it has had to before it gets to you!

Potter's tea party

45 minutes - 1 hour

National Curriculum:

Art & Design: the history of art, craft, design and architecture, including periods, styles and major movements *English:* asking questions to improve their understanding of a text; predicting what might happen from details stated and implied; identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning; drawing inferences such as inferring character's feelings, thoughts, and motives from their actions; identifying main ideas from more than one paragraph and summarising these; distinguish between statements of fact and opinion; retrieve, record and present information from non-fiction; participate in discussions about books, building on their own and others' ideas and challenging views courteously; explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read; provide reasoned justifications for their views

Materials needed: Tea party cards or quotes; tea and biscuits (optional)

Key Questions: Who were some of the key people who helped Leach with the Pottery in St. Ives? How

Learning Objectives: Students will roleplay historic characters and analyse texts to look for clues to backgrounds, relationships, and philosophies. Students will be able to construct strong analytical questions regarding their visit to the Leach Pottery after completion of the tea party activity. Students will formulate their own opinions about the text as they interact with one another.

Suggested open-ended discussion questions:

Leach's writings could sometimes be contradictory and prescriptive, but there is no doubt that he was one of the most important figures in twentieth century art criticism. There are no right or wrong answers, but a discussion of his philosophy will contextualize your visit and the importance of the pottery for creating a space for clay to be considered an artform. Ask students to use their quotes to provide contextual answers to these questions and encourage deeper discussion by making sure everyone contributes something from their quote.

1. What did Leach want his writing to do?
2. What were the criteria that he used to define a good pot?
3. Did Leach think everyone could make good pottery?

4. What did Leach feel was necessary for a potter to make good work?
5. How did he feel about industrially made pottery?
6. In what ways does Leach claim pottery has changed over time?

Activity:

A tea party is an interactive learning activity in which students use texts to make predictions about their visit. There are two variations provided. However, there are many ways to adapt the materials provided to suit your students and curriculum. There are also many good ideas for hosting a classroom tea party online.

Meeting & Greeting Tea Party:

- 1) Besides Mr. Leach, there were many people involved with making the Leach pottery successful. In this activity, students will have a chance to meet a few of them and discover more about them. Students will be given one of six character cards. Ask them to write two questions and two thoughts about their character after reading the description.
- 2) They need to travel around the room, talking to as many characters as possible. Students will talk to at least five other people, taking on the role of the character from the card they were given and exchanging information. Colour coding the individual character cards helps students to identify who has a character they still need to talk to.
- 3) Give them some time to finish up any final thoughts and discuss the students' predictions and questions for their visit, what specific words/phrases/sentences helped create the predictions, and any personal experience or prior knowledge a student might have shared.

Silent Tea Party:

- 1) In this variation, each student is given one of the quotes from Bernard Leach's writings. They will use them to try to discover and describe his ideas about pottery.
- 2) They first read their own quote, noting down any words or phrases they think might be important or unfamiliar vocabulary.
- 3) Students travel around the room and "meet" other people in class by shaking their hand. The first handshake indicates that they would like to swap quotes. The second handshake says, "Here is your quote back. Thank you for letting me look at it!"
- 4) Have students meet in small groups. Give each group several markers and a large sheet of paper to discuss and write down their ideas and further questions.

Hiya! I'm **Janet Leach**. I'm originally from Texas, but after the war I went to Japan to study pottery with Shoji Hamada. I was the first foreign woman to do that! When I married Bernard Leach in 1955, I came here to St. Ives. I ran the pottery for more than 40 years, taking care of the place while Bernard was away travelling and lecturing. I had my own ideas about pottery, though, and I made lots of work to exhibit myself too.

Good morning. My name is **David Leach**. I was born in Japan while my father Bernard Leach was living there. I trained as a pottery manager in Stoke-on-Trent and when I took over running the pottery in St. Ives, I changed from a wood-burning to an oil-burning kiln and made the workshop more modern and efficient. In 1955, I left to start my own pottery where I still carried on the family traditions, but with my own distinct interpretations. I was awarded an OBE for my work as a potter and teacher.

Hello there. My name is **Michael Cardew**. Although I read classics at Oxford, I really just wanted to make pottery. I was one of the first apprentices at St. Ives. While I didn't stay very long before I left to set up my own pottery, we stayed friends and colleagues for many years, sharing ideas and promoting our work by lecturing and publishing. I think Bernard Leach's ideas have a great deal to do with the development of the Modern school of pottery.

Hello, I'm **Katheryn- Pleydell-Bouverie**. I was very lucky to grow up on a beautiful estate in Berkshire. I first learned pottery at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London from Dora Billington, but I soon convinced Bernard Leach to take me on as a student at his new pottery in St. Ives. For women like me and Norah Braden, it was a pretty radical thing to do, but we stuck with it. I continued to work as a potter for the next 60 years, making things that were simple and functional, inspired by natural textures and forms.

Hi. I'm **William Marshall**, but my friends call me Bill. I was born here in St. Ives and I started working at the pottery as an apprentice when I was just a lad of 14! I soon learned everything there is to know about making pots and I was Mr. Leach's right-hand man. Especially as he got older, I would make pots for him to decorate. I was never one to boast—but I supervised all the pottery we made to sell, and I made some things for myself that weren't so bad either.

A pleasure to meet you. I am **Mrs. Frances Horne**. I founded the St Ives Handcraft Guild in 1920 because I wanted to provide creative employment for the community. Young Mr. Leach was introduced to me and I thought a pottery would be just the thing to have in St. Ives. I offered him a loan of £2500 to set up his pottery with Hamada and gave him £250 for 3 years to get it going (which was a lot of money in those days!). It was a bit rough in those early years, but it seems to be doing alright now, doesn't it?

- Quote 1** Potting is one of the few activities today in which a person can use his natural faculties of head, heart, and hand in balance.
- Quote 2** Out of my dual experience [in the East and West] I have tried to formulate a criterion by which good pots may be recognized in a manner similar to that by which an ever-changing but nevertheless continuous classic standard encourages the appreciation of fine architecture, painting, writing and music.
- Quote 3** My frequent criticism of mass-produced wares should not be regarded as an attack upon the machine so much as an exposure of the false standards of beauty, whether of commercial origin or of debased court taste, which have accompanied the rise of industrialism.
- Quote 4** Very few people in this country think of the making of pottery as an art, and amongst those few the great majority have no criterion of aesthetic values which would enable them to distinguish between the merely good and the meretricious.
- Quote 5** The potter is no longer a peasant or journeyman as in the past, nor can he be any longer described as an industrial worker: he is by force of circumstances an artist-craftsman.
- Quote 6** ...the work of the individual potter-artist, who performs all or nearly all the processes of production with his own hands, belongs to one aesthetic category, and the finished result of the operations ...of mass production, to another and quite different category.
- Quote 7** In the work of the potter-artist, who throws his own pots, there is a unity of design and execution, a cooperation of hand and undivided personality, for designer and craftsman are one.
- Quote 8** The art of the craftsman...is intuitive and humanistic (one hand one brain) ...
- Quote 9** The products of [machines] can never possess the same intimate qualities as those [made by hand], but to deny them the possibility of excellence of design ...is both blind and obstinate.
- Quote 10** Good hand craftsmanship is directly subject to the prime source of human activity, whereas machine crafts, even at their best, are activated at one remove—by the intellect.
- Quote 11** The trouble is, however, that at a conservative estimate, about nine tenths of the industrial pottery produced ...is hopelessly bad in both form and decoration...[with] a crudity of colour combined with cheapness and inappropriateness of decoration and tawdriness of form that must be seen to be believed.
- Quote 12** The public is ever increasingly out of touch with the making of articles of everyday use...
- Quote 13** [The Leach Pottery was]...an attempt by an artist-potter to discover and reapply standards of craftsmanship which had been largely forgotten in the passage from traditional hand-methods to large scale industrial production.
- Quote 14** ...the intuitive, organic qualities of Sung pottery can never be completely expressed by the rational and tectonic methods of big industry.
- Quote 15** In the East, [aesthetic criteria for pottery] has long been in existence, especially in Japan, where the aesthetic sensibility of educated people has been stimulated by the ablest of critics...
- Quote 16** A potter's traditions are part of a nation's cultural inheritance... We live in dire need of a unifying culture out of which fresh traditions may grow.
- Quote 17** The necessity for a psychological and aesthetic common foundation in any workshop group of craftsmen cannot be exaggerated, if the resulting crafts are to have any vitality.

- Quote 18** As soon as [the self-conscious art students who come to the pottery] have picked up enough knowledge, or what they think is enough, off they go to start potting on a studio scale for themselves. Very few have proved themselves to be artists.
- Quote 19** Only the artist and craftsman of unusual perception and strength of character stands a chance...as soon as the craftsman becomes individual and detached from his tradition he stands on the same footing as the artist.
- Quote 20** But the important question is to discover how in our disintegrating times individual potters are to discover their particular kind of truth, in other words, their highest standard, and further, by what means it can be passed on to other artist-potters to the end that humanistic work of true merit, especially for domestic use, may be produced.
- Quote 21** We craftsmen, who have been called artist, have the whole world to draw upon for incentive beauty.
- Quote 22** ...how people are to recognize good work...with their bodies...with the mind acting directly through the senses, taking in form, texture, pattern and colour, and referring the sharp immediate impressions to personal experience of use and beauty combined.
- Quote 23** It must always be remembered that the disassociation of use and beauty is a purely arbitrary thing. It is true that pots exist which are useful and not beautiful, and others that are beautiful and impractical; but neither of these extremes can be considered normal: the normal is a balanced combination of the two.
- Quote 24** ...it seems reasonable to expect that beauty will emerge from a fusion of the individual character and culture of the potter with the nature of his materials—clay, pigment, glaze—and his management of the fire...
- Quote 25** ...we may hope to find in good pots those innate qualities which we most admire in people. It is for this reason that I consider the mood, or nature of a pot to be of first importance.
- Quote 26** The shape of a pot cannot be dissociated from the way it has been made, one may throw fifty pots in an hour, on the same model, which only vary in fractions of an inch, and yet only half a dozen of them may possess that right relationship of parts which gives vitality—life flowing for a few moments through the hands of the potter.
- Quote 27** ...the first thing we must look for is...proper adaptation to use and suitability to material. Without these we cannot hope to find beauty in any of its modes, nobility, austerity, strength, breadth, subtilty, warmth...
- Quote 28** ...a pot in order to be good should be a genuine expression of life. It implies sincerity on the part of the potter and truth in the conception and execution of the work.
- Quote 29** The foot, upon which the pot stands, should be reasonably wide for stability, but over and beyond that its angles and proportion should relate to the lip, to which the eye instinctively leaps.
- Quote 30** Some of the most beautiful pots in the world are full of technical imperfections.
- Quote 31** Rarity is no guarantee of beauty, and the cunning search for it only a hindrance to appreciation of beauty as normality.
- Quote 32** The extent to which quite ordinary people react to the changing beauty of a shape on the potter's wheel has been a continual revelation to me of their latent desire, and often capacity, to make good things, to use them, or at the very least to learn to know them.

Making your mark

45 minutes - 1 hour

National Curriculum:

Art & Design: to analyse and evaluate their own work, and that of others, in order to strengthen the visual impact or applications of their work

Mathematics: use mathematical vocabulary to describe position, direction and movement, including reflection and rotation

Materials needed: Images from the image bank showing the stamps used by the Leach Pottery; Photocopies of the marking your mark worksheet, one per child.

Optional: A clay object with a maker's mark or signature (Look on the bottom of your dishware!);

Photocopies or reference books such as *British Studio Potters' Marks* by Eric Yates-Owen and Robert Fournier *Available in the Leach Library*

A quick image search online for 'pottery marks' will offer some good examples as well.

<http://bispm.co.uk/search.php>

Examples of prehistoric marks can be found: <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/engin/trademark/timeline/pre/pots.html>

Key Questions: Why do potters sign their work using a stamp? What does the Leach Pottery mark symbolize and why is it important?

Learning Objectives: Students will understand the practical function and symbolic significance of a maker's mark, and in particular, the Leach Pottery stamp. Students will choose one design as their maker's mark to represent themselves symbolically.

Extension: Make stamps with students' marks. Remember that in making a stamp, all lettering or directional images must be done backwards to show up in the reverse on the work.



Carving the design into the stamp will produce a raised image. Carving the stamp away from your design will produce a hollow image.

Activity:

- 1) Introduce students to the concept by allowing them to explore objects and images of maker's marks. Have them choose at least two examples and pair-share why they like it.
- 2) Even very ancient pottery sometimes has the name of the person who made it. It's rare, but it allows archaeologists to know about the lives of potters who lived a long time ago. Today some potters write their name, but many use a stamp, an idea that grew out of the way Bernard saw art being signed in Asia and Japan.
Extension: Have students discuss the placement of pottery marks. Do they notice that some places are more common? Why do they think this might be? Why might a factory want to put a mark on their work? Why do you think some studio potters use a stamp? What would be the advantages over drawing it each time?
- 3) The symbol used by the Leach pottery to 'sign' their work is a very important maker's mark.
 - a. It is a symbol of quality: Even today the potters who make things at the Leach Pottery have to be really good before they get to use the stamp!
 - b. It tells you where the pot was made and who made it. Sometimes there are two stamps, one for the pottery and one for the potter. For example, Bernard Leach had a special BL stamp just for him that he used along with the Leach Pottery Stamp.
 - c. It has uses an image to represent St. Ives and Leach's connection to Japan where they use stamps to sign art.
- 4) Hand out worksheet. You might demonstrate the process with your own mark, talking about your thinking as you try out different ideas and variations. Circulate during the worktime and encourage students to try different variations and ideas, and encourage them to keep it simple! Older students can try out more ideas in a sketchbook, choose their top five and have a small group critique to choose the final design. Give a 5-minute warning reminder to choose the best.
- 5) Students who are participating in a practical workshop at the pottery can bring and use this final design on their work.
- 6) Have the students share and explain what they have chosen to include in their maker's mark. Put together a wall poster or 'dictionary' of your classes' marks.

Making Your Mark

Name: _____

Class: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:



Think about your design: It will represent you in a unique way! You can use your initials, a symbol or design you like, or any combination of the above.



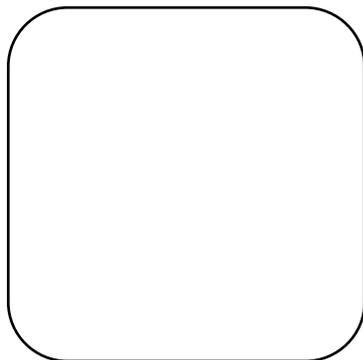
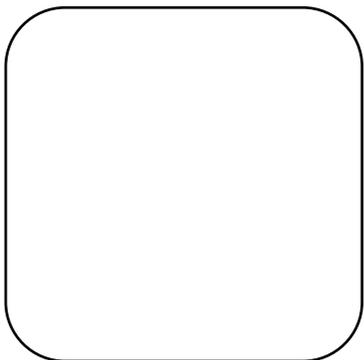
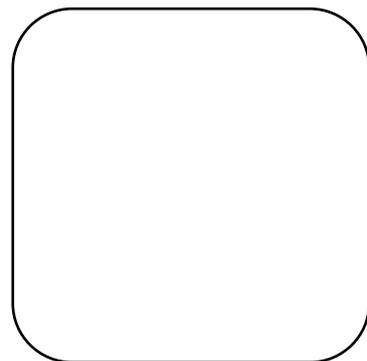
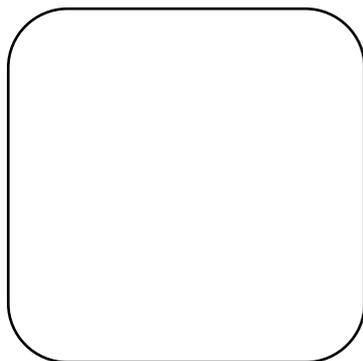
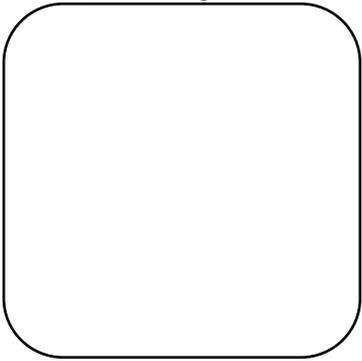
Draw **AT LEAST five** different ideas in the boxes below. If you get stuck, try turning your shapes or letters or ask your neighbour for a suggestion. Use more paper if you need to.



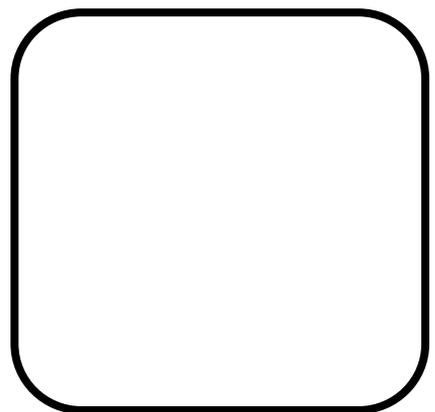
Choose one of the designs that you like the best to be your maker's mark. What will you put it on?

★ **TIP: Keep your design simple!**

Draw your design ideas here:



Draw your final design idea here:



Many potters and ceramic artists mark their work with a special symbol, just like a painter signs a painting.

Your stamp is a creative way to put a bit of yourself into the pots you make. (And if you become famous, it makes your pots worth a whole lot more!)

Self-Guided Museum Activities

A visit to the Leach Pottery offers students the ability to explore first-hand the rich history and influence of the pottery, but also the wide range of skills in maths, science, and design used by studio potters today. Small groups of younger visitors can also use the museum family trail sheet (available at reception) to guide their visit.

Developing Vocabulary: Choose a spot in the museum to stop and ask students to use their imagination and senses to write as many descriptive words as they can. Keep these lists to use as prompts for poems.

Recognising Influences & Aesthetics

Ask students to identify some of the design ideas and values of the Leach Pottery by comparing and contrasting the pots, artworks, and equipment on display.

Reflect & Respond: While on site, besides completing any guided activities, be sure to leave time for students to respond creatively and document their experiences. Taking photos, recording impressions and drawing in sketchbooks are all great ways to do this. These can also be used after returning to the classroom for a variety of creative extensions.

Negative space

Have students focus and shade in the spaces around and between objects rather than the objects themselves. This allows them to focus on the form and silhouette rather than being overwhelmed by details.

Noticing the details:

Make detailed images of small sections (use a paper viewfinder to help).

Seeing in the round

Choose a three-dimensional object to draw/photograph several times from multiple perspectives. Students could try working their way around or looking at it from above or below, etc.

Exploring an object: Being able to view physical objects from many dimensions is one of the key differences between first hand research and reading about it in a book. Have students choose one item in the museum to look at. It could be a pot, a piece of equipment, or something else they find interesting.

Use the guiding questions to find out as much information as they can about their object:

What can we see?

What colour is it?

What shape is it?

How big is it?

What is it made of?

How heavy does it seem?

Does it have decoration? Where? How would you describe it?

Does it look used or broken? If so, where? What do you think this means?

Does it look like it can move? How?

What does it smell like?

How would you describe the surface?

What do you like about it? What don't you like?

What words would you use to describe this object?

What can we figure out?

Does this image/artefact remind you of anything that you have seen or experienced in your own life?

What do you already know about it?

How might it have been used?

How does it make you feel?

Why is it this size, shape, colour or weight?

What does this design represent?

Why is the object made of this material and not another?

Is it made of traditional or contemporary materials?

How is it made?

How are the different pieces joined together?

What title would you give this object? Does it need a title?

What do we understand?

Why do you think it is here in the museum? How do you think it got here?

Do you think many people would have bought an object like this?

What does it mean to the people who made it? To the people who used it? To people who come to see it at the pottery?

What does this object symbolize?

How do the materials used help to convey these ideas?

Is it the same or different from the things around it?

Is there any other information in the museum to help you investigate this object?

Is this object intended for a specific use? Is it public or private?

Where else outside the museum could you look for more information about the object?

What are three questions you still want to ask about this object or the person who made it?

Finding shapes

National Curriculum:

Art & Design: use drawing to record observations & experiences; develop techniques in line, shape, form and space

Materials needed: One Shape Scavenger hunt sheet per pair

Key Questions: What kinds of shapes do potters use? How does the shape influence the function and decoration of the pot?

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to recognize the shape of a pot in outline and copy it.

Activity:

- 1) Find a pot in the studio that matches one of the shapes on the worksheet.
- 2) Hand out the worksheet and do a demonstration as a whole group. Decide, depending on the age level of the group whether you want them to copy the outline only, to draw details of the pot they have found, or include describing words as well.
- 3) Be watchful for opportunities to point out pots that match the shapes as you go; stop and offer students the opportunity to focus on the activity.
- 4) Taking photos of the pots can offer an additional avenue for recording and sharing.

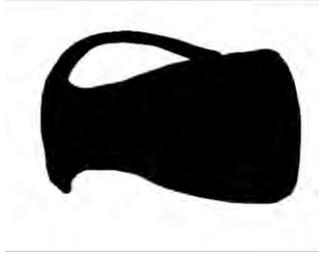
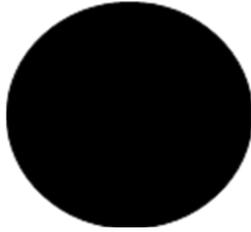
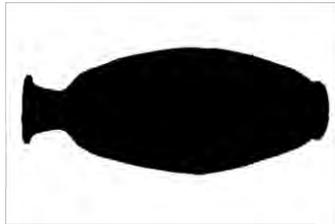
Extension: Discuss with students why they think potters make the different shapes. Why is a jug or a vase made like a cylinder? Could it hold water if it was flat like a plate?

How do you think Are these shapes any different from the dishes they use at home? Do some shapes or sizes have more decoration than others?

If your group has seen the throwing demonstrations, discuss the ways a pot is made influences its shape: Why do they think work made on a pottery wheel is usually round? Why do you think that might be? If you were a potter, what kinds of shapes would you like to make?

SHAPES AROUND THE POTTERY SCAVENGER HUNT

Name: _____
Class: _____



Find a pot with
this shape!

Draw it here!

Describe it!

How does a potter make every bowl the same size? Calculating Shrinkage

20-30 minutes

National Curriculum:

Mathematics: solve multiple step questions using information presented in pictograms; solve problems which require knowledge of percentages

Science: ask questions and develop a line of inquiry based on observations of the real world, alongside prior knowledge and experience

Design & Technology: understand and use the properties of materials and the performance of structural elements to achieve functioning solutions

Materials needed: Calculating Clay Shrinkage Worksheet, pencils, calculators (optional)

More information on the fascinating chemical process that occurs when a bowl is in the kiln can be found at

<http://www.ceramicindustry.com/articles/84673-ppp-clay-body-shrinkage-absorption>

Key Questions: How do the material components of clay affect the size of the final product? What factors does a potter have to keep in mind in order to make standard ware? Why does the Pottery make standard ware?

Learning Objectives: Students will understand that different types of clay shrink at different rates and will be able to calculate the rate given measurements of the work. Students will understand the importance of this calculation in making Standard Ware at the Pottery.

Background: Since the 1930s, the Leach Pottery has been producing a set of pots made specifically for people to use. It was a way to train the many students who came here to learn and helped support the pottery financially, but perhaps most importantly, it represented Bernard Leach's efforts to create a 'standard' of beauty and function that everyone could own. It combined the factory production learned by David Leach (Bernard's son) in Stoke-On-Trent and the ways of making and aesthetics that Bernard Leach had learned in Japan.

In order to do this, all of the pots had to be good enough to meet his standard. This included all being the same size, weight and shape. The standard ware has changed over time, depending on who the lead potter. A skilled potter can learn to do copy the shapes with enough practice, but there are other factors, including the shrinkage of the clay, that are just as important.

Activity:

This activity can be completed after your visit and depending on the independent math skills of your students, also makes a good activity for after lunch or to fill transition or travel time.

- 1) Have a look at the pottery for sale in the shop. Every potter has a different way of working, but they all have to be able to use some essential maths. Find the display of Standard Ware on sale in the shop (across from the till). How would the students describe it? Why do they think it's called 'standard' ware? Share some of the background information.
- 2) Head out of the shop and hand out the worksheet. Discuss the answer to the first question as a class: Think particularly about why potters might need bowls that are sold as dish sets to be a consistent size, and about the need for lids to fit properly.

3) Answers:

Bowl 1: 12%

Bowl 2: 11.25%

Bowl 3: 11.5%

Bowl 4: 11%

Bowl 5: 13%

Stoneware (a kind of clay that is usually brownish in colour, is very durable, and fires at high temperatures) used at the pottery for Standard Ware today has a shrinkage of 12.7%

See if you can find the shrinkage test tiles on display in the wheel room!

The Case of The Shrinking Bowls:

Name: _____

Class: _____

One of the Leach Pottery apprentices noticed something odd happening every time she fired her bowls. They all seemed to have shrunk in the kiln and be smaller than she remembered! She decided to do an experiment and find out what was going on. She made five bowls from five different mixtures of clay that each had a diameter of 10 centimetres across the top and put them in the kiln. Sure enough, when they came back out they *were* all smaller.



When she asked the lead potter what was wrong with her bowls, he told her that was a normal part of making pottery. In order to be soft enough to make into pots, the clay has a lot of water that takes up room between the particles of clay. The clay starts shrinking as soon as it is exposed to the air and starts to dry out. The clay particles shrink together to fill the spaces left by the evaporating water. Each different mixture of clay has a different rate of *shrinkage* depending on which ingredients are in the mixture.

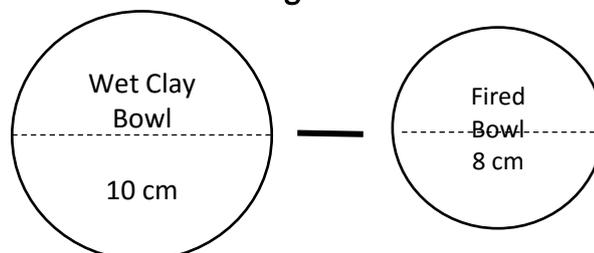
The higher the shrinkage, the smaller the pot. Potters usually give this as a percentage, because the pot will be a certain percentage smaller than the size than it was when it was put in the kiln.

Why do you think it is important for potters to be able to calculate the shrinkage of their clay?

To find the shrinkage rate, you need to find the **percentage decrease**:

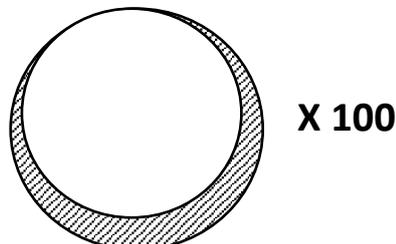
1) *Subtract* the **finished diameter** from the **original size**:

$$10\text{cm} - 8\text{cm} = 2\text{cm}$$

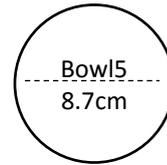
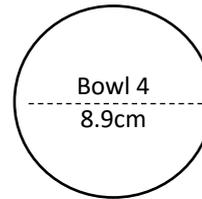
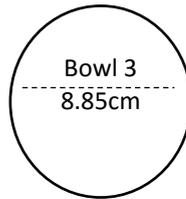
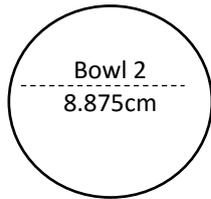
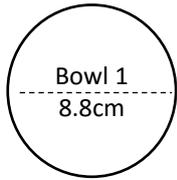


2) *Divide* the **size decrease** by the **original size** and *multiply* by **100**:

$$2\text{ cm} \div 10\text{ cm} \times 100 = 20\% \text{ decrease}$$



Here are the diameters of the apprentice's bowls as they came out of the kiln



Calculate the shrinkage rate of each of the apprentices' bowls. Show your work:

Shrinkage Bowl 1: _____

Shrinkage Bowl 2: _____

Shrinkage Bowl 3: _____

Shrinkage Bowl 4: _____

Shrinkage Bowl 5: _____

BONUS: If the apprentice wants to make a bowl that has a finished, fired diameter of 25 centimeters out of a clay that has a shrinkage of 10%, what diameter does the bowl need to be before she puts it in the kiln? _____

Clay continues to dry until it reaches the moisture content of the atmosphere in the studio. After it is made, clay must dry thoroughly before it can be put in the kiln. But even if you let it dry for months, mechanical water (moisture in the studio atmosphere) and chemical water (water tied up on a molecular level within the clay) will remain in the "bone dry" clay. Only the high heat of the kiln can dry the clay completely by changing its chemical composition in a process called **vitrification**. If the clay is heated too quickly, steam can build up inside the pot and cause it to explode!

Here are the shrinkage rates of different kinds of clays.
Earthenware: 6-8%
Stoneware: 11-13%
Porcelain: 14-15%

What kind of clay is the apprentice using to make her bowls?

Pottery history detective

National Curriculum:

Art & Design: the history of art, craft, design and architecture, including periods, styles and major movements from ancient times up to the present day

History: changes within living memory. Where appropriate, these should be used to reveal aspects of change in national life; significant historical events, people and places in their own locality

Materials needed: Images of the pottery before the opening of the museum from the Additional Resources Images. Optional: student sketchbooks, torch (may be available to borrow from reception)

Key Questions: How does the way a building looks reflect its history? Where are some of the visual clues to change found at the Leach Pottery? Why do we preserve historic buildings?

Learning Objectives: Students will observe and be able to identify patterns of use based on the physical building. Students will use this information to speculate on the changes to the site over time.

Activity:

If you are taking a guided tour, many of these questions will be answered. These are suggested prompts for discussion and can be used in any order. Alternately, provide the students with them to find scavenger-hunt style.

We preserve historic buildings because of the stories that are preserved in the buildings themselves. We can look for clues to what has happened in the buildings over time and of the people who lived here.

- 1) From outside, have a good look at the different buildings. **Which ones do they think are older and which newer? How would they describe the differences? Are there clues to how they look that show the function of each space?** *Hint:* The new production studio, museum & galleries, and historic buildings each have a unique look.
- 2) Compare the historic image of the pottery buildings with what they can see on site. **How would it be different? What specific changes can they identify and what elements are still the same?** Imagine what it would be like to come here as a student when it was new. **What would they see, smell and hear?**
- 3) In the kiln room, look up at the walls. **What do they think has caused the black colour?** *Hint:* In the 1930s, these kilns were converted from wood to oil burning. Look inside of the kiln. **What do they notice about the walls of the chambers? Does it remind them of the glaze they have seen on the pots? What do they think happened to make it that way? Can they see a difference in the different chambers? Is this a clue to the age or use of the different parts of the kiln?** *Hint:* During the firing, the temperature is hot enough to melt and vaporize the glass in the glaze. This kiln was used for more than 50 years! Over time glaze residue builds up on the walls. The fire is hottest in the lowest parts of the kiln. The top part of the kiln didn't get as hot, so they used this for the first part of the firing process, bisque firing. How many pieces do they think may have been fired in the kiln in that time?
- 4) **Is anything they have noticed about the town of St. Ives that would give a clue as to why the pottery was located here?** Watch out for clues to the artistic heritage and find connections with the community of artists. *Hint:* How many galleries and places to see art are found in this town compared to others of a similar size?

A potter from Japan

National Curriculum:

Art & Design: about great artists, architects and designers in history

History: study of a significant society or issue in world history and its interconnections with other world developments

Materials needed: (optional) sketchbooks

Key Questions: Who was Shoji Hamada and what was his contribution to the Leach Pottery? How did Bernard bring the styles and ideas of Japanese and Chinese potters to England?

Learning Objectives: Students will practice Japanese Brushwork and make observations about the use of this technique.

Background: Bernard Leach was born in Hong Kong. After returning to England and receiving an art education, he travelled back to Asia to Japan. In England in the 1920s, almost all pottery was being made by the efficient factories of Stoke-On-Trent. In both England and Japan, rapid industrialization and urbanization had changed the way many people thought about the kind of life they wanted to live and the kinds of products they wanted to buy. Bernard was in Japan when the Mingei Movement, devoted to Japanese folkcrafts, developed. There, Bernard was introduced to a different way of thinking about pottery. He was able to learn skills and techniques from potters whose traditional knowledge went back many generations.

When he returned to England, Bernard combined the English Arts & Crafts philosophies of John Ruskin and William Morris—who valued craftsmanship and things made by hand—with the Japanese concept that beauty could be found in selflessness, simplicity, and humility to form a new idea: the *artist potter*.

Leach and Hamada continued to be friends and visit each other for many years. Even today, the pottery and the towns of Mashiko and St Ives have a special connection, with visitors and potters travelling back and forth just like Leach and Hamada.

Activity:

- 1) Share the background information with the students. In the old pottery you will find evidence of the technologies (the climbing kiln, raku firing, and brushes) that Bernard Leach brought back, but there is one connection with Japan that requires a little imagination. Bernard didn't return to England alone. A young man named Shoji Hamada left the town of Mashiko in Japan and made the long journey to Cornwall with him. He stayed for three years to build the first climbing kiln in Europe and help start the pottery. Can you imagine what it must have been like for him to leave his family and travel to a place where the language, customs, and food were very different?
- 2) The climbing kiln you see today was built in 1924 by another man who travelled from Japan to St Ives, Tsurunosuke Matsubayashi. His family had been potters for over five hundred years! He built it so well that the Leach Pottery used it for 50 years.
- 3) On the shelves in the glaze room, there are mats for practicing the brushwork that Leach learned in Japan. A brush with ink is used for traditional calligraphy and painting in Japan. Alternating with another activity to avoid ques, students in small groups or pairs can try to replicate some of the decoration that both Leach and Hamada put on their pottery. See if you can identify the tools that were used to brush decoration onto the pots.
- 4) You can see more of Hamada's work in the entrance gallery. Compare the work of Leach and Hamada. Can you see where they used the brush as decoration?

Extension:

Explore the Mingei movement in Japan and how it related to the Arts & Crafts movement in the UK. Who were the key figures/ideas and how was Leach involved?

Visit Lauren Lancy's blog to read about her trip to Hamada's pottery in Mashiko.
<http://thekindcraft.com/mashiko/>

A day in the life of an apprentice

KS 1-3

National Curriculum:

English: discuss sequence of events and how items of information are related; adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role; improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama

Materials needed: Student sketchbooks and pencils for taking notes (optional)

Key Questions: What is an apprentice? What does an apprentice need to know?

Learning Objectives: Students will role play the job of a pottery apprentice using kinetic and haptic knowledge to understand the tasks involved in producing pottery.

Activity:

- 1) Explain that being an apprentice at the pottery is like being a student and having a job at the same time! For many years, that was how people learned trades like pottery. An apprentice learns all of the different parts of the job so they can start their own workshop later, and makes pottery for the studio to sell.
- 2) As your students tour the museum, ask them to pay attention to all the different tasks they hear or see that need to be done in order to run the pottery. Some suggestions might include:
 - Ordering the clay, delivering the clay, mixing the clay, preparing the clay, wedging the clay, throwing the pots, loading and unloading the bisque kiln, glazing the pots, loading and unloading the glaze kiln, having a critique at the fireplace, doing a demonstration for a group of students...
- 3) In small groups or with adult leaders as scribes, write down the activities as they encounter them. (As you enter each room, or after your tour, give verbal reminders of the task). Discuss together, and give the students 10-15 minutes to plan a mini-skits (1-3 minutes) of a day in the life of an apprentice. Remind the students to be respectful of the displays and other visitors and ask them to mimic the action only!
- 4) For large groups, divide up the students and assign each one a time of day (morning, afternoon, evening etc.) or process (making, glazing, firing etc.) to act out. Move with the whole group through the site, watching each small group perform. This can also be done upon returning to the classroom.
- 5) For younger students, rather than waiting until the end, point out activities as you come to each new location and have one or two students role play the action of the apprentice for the class.
- 6) Alternatively, students could take turns acting as the apprentices and be interviewed by the class about their role.

Learning Extension Activities

Cement the experience of a visit to the Leach Pottery by following up back in the classroom. **Make sure and share your projects with us!**

Revisit **vocabulary lists** and **KWL charts** to identify any ideas or terms they discovered. Connect these to their sketchbook work or use them to conduct further research to find out more about the objects they explored by searching online or in reference books.

Story starters: Have each student write and illustrate a story from the point of view of a piece of Leach pottery that begins with the following sentence, or make up one of your own: 'I waited on the shelf in the pottery, hoping that someday...'

Write a diary entry from the perspective of Bernard Leach or Shoji Hamada on their trip from Japan to St. Ives to start the pottery or as one of the many students and apprentices who came here to learn pottery.

Creative response: Provide materials or an assignment that allows students a chance to reflect. Choose one or two images to develop and extend into a finished piece: photos, sketches, audio, and words recorded on site could be used for photo essays, developed into a podcast or music, finished drawings or made into ceramics that emphasize and explore features of their experience.

Sharing with others: Create a poster or brochure that summarizes the role of the Leach Pottery and what visitors can expect to learn. Write and narrate an audio trail or guidebook for other students. Create a 'virtual' museum of studio pottery by posting images around the room. Ask students to write a critical review of their visit.

Fireplace Critique: If your group took part in one of the making workshops, organize a fireside critique. Put up paper fireplace or draw one on the board, or even just in a circle in one corner of the classroom. Bring in tea or other snacks and have students share their work. For older students, especially design classes, this can be an opportunity to reflect on the progress of the work and how they understand the standards of Leach. If you don't regularly hold critiques of artwork, there are excellent resources online that give lots of suggestions for encouraging deep, positive discussion.

Curate an exhibition: During your visit, discuss with students the ways pots and displays are arranged at the museum. Take note of how much space is between the pots? What kinds of information was included about each piece? Decide on place to hold an 'exhibition' of your work in the school or community. Students can write a short piece of information about their own work, and work in groups to produce longer texts about the display, their visit, and what they learned.

Discuss the sustainability of pottery production and use: One of the major themes developing in contemporary studio pottery is sustainability. As well as promoting the importance of the local craftsman, Bernard Leach also experimented with firing raw clay as a way to save fuel.

Potters and consumers are increasingly concerned with firing processes, **end use patterns**, material sourcing, shipping & global production, and reducing our consumption of fossil fuels through local clay rather than imported plastic.

See Robert Harrison's book *Sustainable Ceramics*, American Ceramics Society 2013.

More information can also be found at

<https://ceramicartsnetwork.org/daily/ceramic-supplies/ceramic-raw-materials/the-wisdom-of-crowds-green-research-in-universities-2/>

For consumers:

<https://moreclaylessplastic.org>

Plan your own pottery

1-2 hours

National Curriculum:

Design & Technology: understand how key events and individuals in design and technology have helped shape the world; analyse the world of past and present professionals and others to develop and broaden their understanding; develop and communicate design ideas using annotated sketches, detailed plans, 3-D and mathematical modelling, oral and digital presentations

Materials needed: My Pottery Worksheet, *A Potter's Book* by Bernard Leach (optional)

Key Questions: What do you need to have in a pottery? How does the use of a building influence its design? How did *A Potter's Book* help new potters to learn their craft?

Learning Objectives: Students will understand the basic requirements of a pottery and will reflect that understanding by designing their own workshops. Students will use *A Potter's Book* as a reference and understand its influence.

Activity:

- 1) Bernard Leach wrote his most famous book *A Potter's Book* to help people who wanted to be independent potters set up their own workshops. Besides giving his ideas about what made a beautiful pot, he wrote lots of practical things too, including a plan of how to organize a studio. You have seen how the Leaches, Hamada, and the other potters organized the studio in St. Ives. They thought very carefully about where each piece of equipment would go.
- 2) Show students the plan of the pottery and demonstrate how to connect the two-dimensional plan to the place and things they experienced by discussing what things they remember, how much space it felt like there was in each room. Use any photos taken at the site or the ones from the further resources in this packet. Review and restate any activities they participated in of the steps that take place in making pottery.
- 3) Introduce the activity, and pass out copies of the considerations. Discuss as necessary.
- 4) A visit to the following websites and books will provide some good ideas:
<https://ceramic.school/how-to-organize-your-pottery-studio/>
Virginia Scotchie: Setting Up Your Ceramic Studio: Ideas & Plans from Working Artists (A Lark Ceramics Book), 2005
- 5) Older students can work to scale on graph paper and create front views as well as floor plans.
- 6) For younger students, allow them to arrange the pre-cut pieces to make their pottery as you discuss the few of the considerations only, perhaps placing one element at a time.
- 7) Encourage creativity in students' design ideas as well as efficiency!

Extension: Explore the differences between renting or converting an existing space (the route most potters take,) with the freedom to build their own pottery like Leach. Think about how the locations sinks, windows, doors, electrical outlets, etc, might affect how you have your studio set up.

In an urban area you might also face further restrictions on the kind of work you can make due to health and safety regulation. as our population becomes increasingly urbanized, how do you think this has changed studio pottery since Leach's time?

Planning Your Pottery

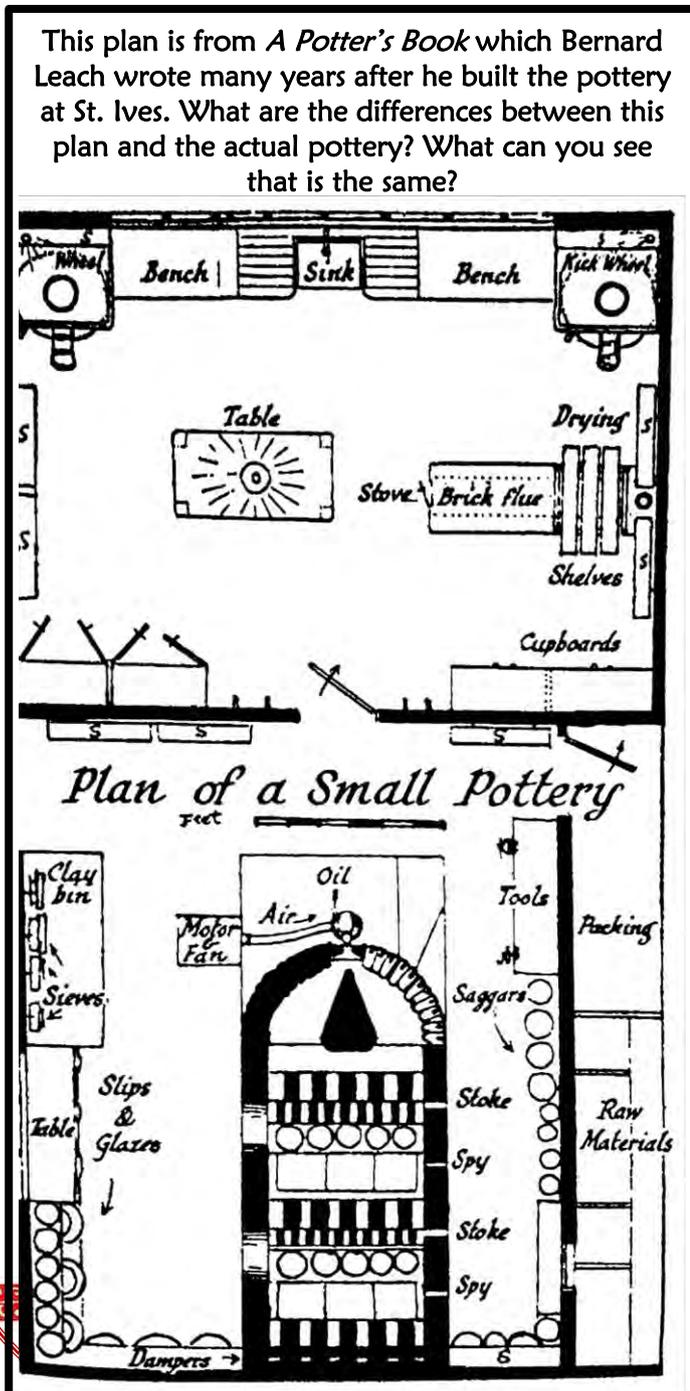
Now it's your turn to put on your apron and plan your own studio. Your studio is your personal creative space and what you include will be up to you, but there are a few things every potter needs to think about. *Below are some questions to ask yourself as you design your pottery.*

Beginning Potters:

- How can you arrange your pottery so that you have room to work and can get from one step to the next without tripping over your equipment or moving anything? How big a studio will you need?
- Do you want a wheel? What kind?
- Where will you do your glazing?
- Where will you keep your clay?
- How will you keep your clay and glazes from getting mixed up?
- Do you want lots of windows? Where will the doors be? Sinks?
- Where will you keep your pots while they are drying?
- How many benches, shelves, and tables do you need?

Advanced Potters:

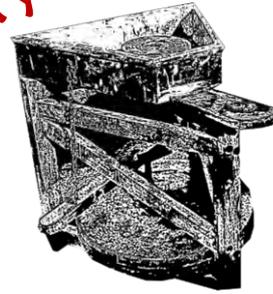
- Are you going to mix your clay from dry ingredients or have it delivered wet? (Will you need storage or a door big enough for a delivery?)
- Where will you keep the buckets of clay for recycling from trimmings?
- Clay materials and glaze materials should be kept separate. How much room will you need for buckets of different kinds of raw materials and tools?
- What kind of kiln do you want: electric, gas, wood, raku? An electric for bisque and a gas for glaze? More than one? Kilns get very hot and you don't want to breathe in the gasses they release. It should be separate and well ventilated.
- Is your pottery going to be an old building or a new one?
- Do you want it to be in the country or the city?
- Do you need electricity or water?
- How many sinks do you want? Clay and other chemicals can't go down a regular sink, so many potters have separate sinks for clay, glaze, and water.
- How many people will be working in your pottery?
- Do you want people to come and visit your studio? Will you need a secure place to keep chemicals or valuable work?
- Will you show or sell your work or do you need a place to pack them for shipping?
- What will the floors and walls be made of? There will be a lot of water, mud, and dust to deal with.
- Do you need a computer or other equipment? Dust and electronics aren't good friends.
- Will you have a slab roller or pug mill?



👤 👤 **Table**



Pottery Wheel



Storage



Buckets



Kiln



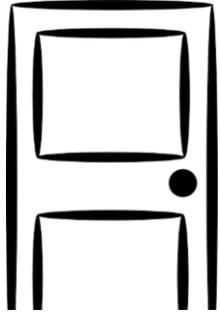
Shelves



Sink

's Pottery

Door



Developing style: Designing your wares

1-2 hours

National Curriculum:

Science: give reasons, based on evidence, for the particular uses of everyday materials;

Design & Technology: use research and develop design criteria to inform the design of innovative, functional, appealing products that are fit for purpose, aimed at particular individuals or groups; generate, develop, model and communicate their ideas through talking, drawing, templates, mock-ups and, where appropriate, information and communication technology; explore and evaluate a range of existing products

Art & Design: use a range of techniques to record their observations in sketchbooks and other media as a basis for exploring ideas

Materials needed: sketchbooks, reference books, internet access (optional)
Ceramic outlines for young students

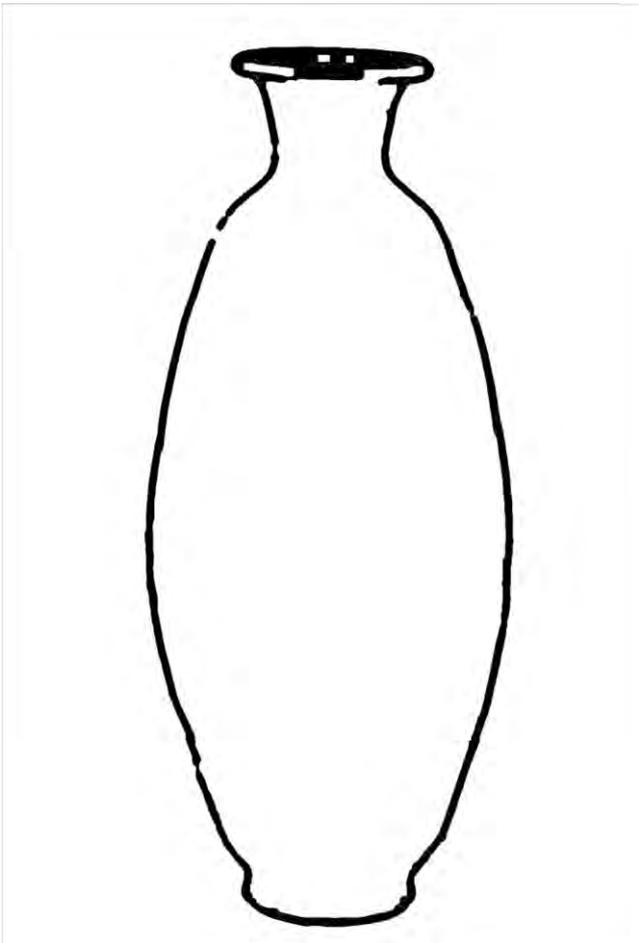
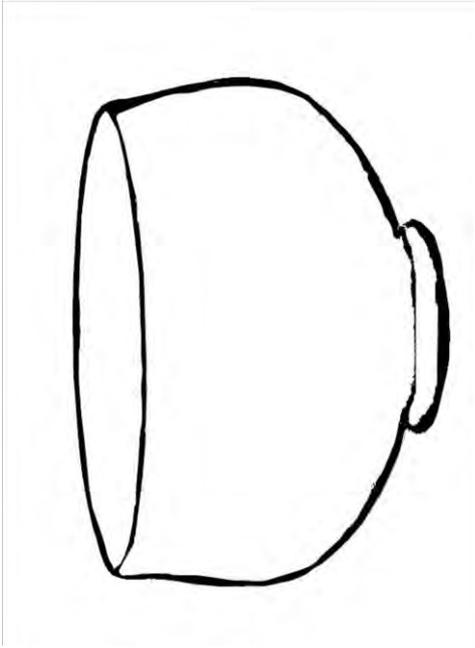
Key Questions: How does a potter make decisions about what kind of work to make?

Learning Objectives: Students will develop a personal range of pottery by making aesthetic choices and decisions about efficiency, function, and market value.

Activity

- 1) During your visit you ask students to pay particular attention to what kinds of work they would like to make.
- 2) Begin with a discussion of what kind of pottery the students remember seeing at the pottery. What kinds of colours, sizes, and decoration did they see? What did they particularly like? Why?
- 3) To explore more ideas, look through reference books or at the work on Cfile Ceramics: <https://cfileonline.org/category/studio-pottery/>
Online Ceramics gallery: <https://www.onlineceramics.com/product-category/artists/>
Ceramik's Form & Function: <http://ceramike.com/forms.asp?Form=Jug&Pot=CassonMJug>
Oxford Ceramics Gallery: <http://www.oxfordceramics.com/>
Maak Contemporary Ceramics <http://www.maaklondon.com/artists/>
Cheddington Studio Pottery <http://www.studiopotterywendy.com/collection/4559804456>
- 4) For younger students, photocopy and enlarge the outlines provided and allow them to decorate.
- 5) Older students should make drawings of the complete range of work they would like to make, and include a plan of production including the sizes and numbers of pieces.
- 6) Ask questions:
 - a. What colours do you want?
 - b. What kind of decoration will your pots have? Stripes, spots, brushwork drawings, patterns?
 - c. Will it be functional, decorative, or somewhere in-between?
 - d. What sizes will you make?
 - e. What is the texture of the surface: rough, shiny, matte?
 - f. Who will buy them? What will you charge for your pieces?
 - g. How many will you make?

Extension: Have students create a brochure or marketing plan to advertise their work.



Glaze calculation

30 minutes

sometimes these effects can be very interesting when used decoratively.

National Curriculum:

Mathematics: solve number problems and practical problems; use numbers in context to extend and apply their knowledge of decimals and fractions; make connections between percentages, fractions and decimals

Design & Technology: understand and use the properties of materials and the performance of structural elements to achieve functioning solutions

Materials needed: Glaze Calculation worksheets

Key Questions: What is a glaze? What skills in math and chemistry does a potter need to consider when formulating their own glazes? How do you calculate the amount of material needed from a glaze recipe?

Learning Objectives: Students will calculate the amounts of dry material and water needed for one of Leach's glaze recipes. Students will be able to identify the four major characteristics of glaze ingredients and identify the analogy used by Leach to explain them.

Background: For a potter, glazes form a basic component of their work. But what is a glaze? Essentially it is powdered ceramic minerals suspended in water that break down and melt during the firing and chemically bond with the clay to create a durable and decorative surface. Like many painters who buy paint rather than producing it themselves, often potters purchase pre-made glazes. These commercially prepared glazes work very well. However, potters sometimes like to create their glazes themselves. This ranges all the way from potters who mix glazes using a standard recipe to potters who dig and process the raw materials themselves.

Experimenting to make new glazes can be very complicated and requires a thorough working knowledge of chemistry, geology, and physics. Potters use controlled tests to find ingredients that react well together in the type of firing the potter wants to use to produce a new colour, texture, transparency, or special effect.

Potters must match the right glaze to the right piece. If the combination of glaze mixture, clay, or firing isn't right, there can be all kinds of problems with the glaze like cracking, dripping, or bubbling. This isn't something you want in a mug or a bowl, but

Activity

- 1) Introduce the background material as necessary.
- 2) Hand out the worksheet. Have students discuss the analogy using the coloured circles. How many of the materials in the recipe they can identify and categorize?

Feldspar	.25	1875g
Limestone	.25	1875g
China Clay	.065	487.5g
Pike's Clay	.20	1500g
Quartz	.20	1500g
Ochre	.02	150 g
Iron Oxide	.015	112.5g
Totals:	1.00	7500g

Extension:

Chemistry for potters from the American Ceramic Society:

<https://ceramicartsnetwork.org/daily/ceramic-glaze-recipes/glaze-chemistry/chemistry-for-potters-a-simplified-explanation-of-common-glaze-materials/>

Digitalfire also has a website with accessible articles covering the science of ceramics, including calculating specific gravity, mole percentage, deflocculating clay, understanding oxides and much more:

<https://digitalfire.com/4sight/education/>

Amaco glazes provide a handy video tutorial on how to measure the specific gravity in glaze:

https://www.amaco.com/clay_how_tos/207

Very advanced students interested in expanding their knowledge of glaze calculation can experiment with creating their own glazes online:

www.glazesimulator.com/

Clothing for a Pot

Name: _____

Class: _____

Bernard Leach wrote *A Potters Book* in 1940 to teach people how to understand and make their own pottery. It was a skill that very few people outside of the factories still had, and unfortunately, it's one where there are a lot of things to go wrong if you don't learn to do it right! To make it easier to understand the chemical ingredients in a glaze, he made an analogy: comparing the functions of glaze materials to our bodies. He also compared putting a glaze on a piece of pottery to putting clothes on the naked clay!

Potters often mix glazes from recipes (although they're definitely not edible!). These recipes are usually written so that the potter can make a batch in any size they need. Let's look at how they do this:

Here is one of Bernard Leach's glaze recipes for 'Kaki':

Feldspar	25
Limestone	25
China Clay	6.5
Pike's Clay	20
Quartz	20
Calcined Ochre	2
Iron Oxide	1.5

This glaze, when fired in **oxidation** (with oxygen in the kiln) is an amber colour and when fired in **reduction** (without enough oxygen in the kiln) a 'quiet grey-green.' Sounds good, right? But what do the numbers mean? This recipe is given in percentages. **Feldspar 25 = 25% Feldspar**

Why do you think we need the amounts of the different ingredients to add up to 100?

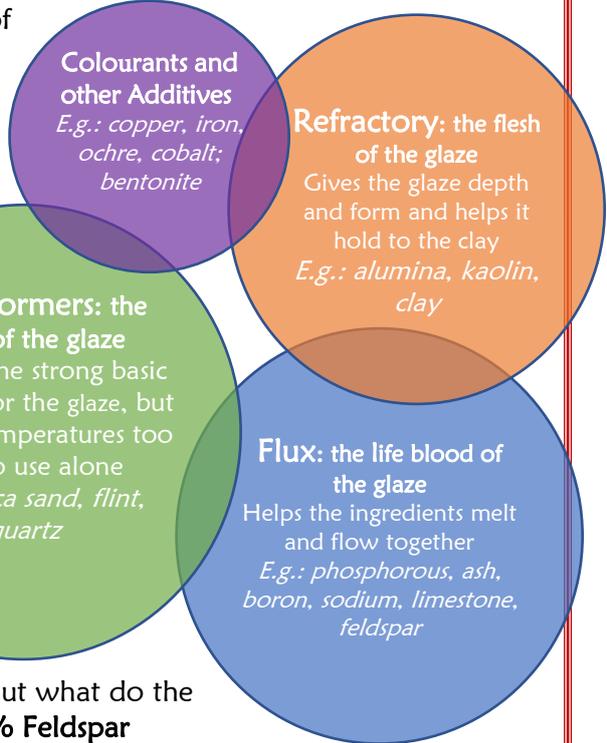
The glaze materials are first mixed as dry powders in those proportions, to make as much or as little as needed. To do that, first we must change that the percentage numbers into decimals. Divide the percentage by 100, or just move the decimal point two places to the left. **Feldspar 25/100 = Feldspar .25**

Fill in the first column of the recipe below with the decimal percentages.

In this case we want to fill a bucket that holds 10,000 grams three-quarters (75%) of the way full.

How many grams of glaze will we need to fill $\frac{3}{4}$ of the bucket? _____

Feldspar	25%	.25	x7500g	175g
Limestone	25%	_____		_____
China Clay	6.5%	_____		_____
Pike's Clay	20%	_____		_____
Quartz	20%	_____		_____
Ochre	2%	_____		_____
Iron Oxide	1.5%	_____		_____
Totals:	_____	_____		_____



To get the actual amount of material we need to measure out, multiply the decimal percentages by the batch size. Don't forget your units and to check that your numbers still add up!
Feldspar .25 x 7500g = 175g

Fill in the second column of the recipe by multiplying each decimal percentage by the batch size.

The legacy of the Leach Pottery

30 minutes

National Curriculum:

Computing: use search technologies effectively, appreciate how results are selected and ranked, and e discerning in evaluating digital content; undertake creative projects that involve selecting, using, and combining multiple applications to achieve challenging goals, including collecting and analysing data

Art & Design: about the history of art, craft, design and architecture, including periods, styles and major movements

Materials needed: World or UK map, pins or stickers; internet access or *Leach Pottery St Ives: The Legacy of Bernard Leach* by Marion Whybrow.

Key Questions: What impact did the Leach Pottery have on studio pottery?

Learning Objectives: Students will use an online search and print resources to locate relevant information. Students will visualize the impact of the Leach pottery by locating on a map the potters and students who came here.

Activity

- 1) One of the reasons the Leach Pottery has been preserved as a museum is the exponential influence that it has had on the teaching and learning of pottery. The students who came to learn here then went on to teach others, who taught others and so on. There are many potters working today who have connections to the Leach Pottery.
- 2) *Leach Pottery St Ives* contains a directory of many of the potters associated with the Leach. The Leach potters' tree on the website below includes second and third generation students as well and is more extensive
<http://www.ceramike.com/LeachTree.asp#>
- 3) Divide the tree among the students. Have them research the locations of the potters represented and mark on the map. You can choose to focus on potters working in the UK, or for more of a challenge, expand to a world map.
- 4) Make sure to put your school on the map!

Additional Resources

Further Reading

A Potter in Japan, Bernard Leach.

A Potter's Work, Bernard Leach.

Bernard Leach, Edmund DeWaal. Tate Publishing, 2013.

Bernard Leach, Hamada and Their Circle: From the Wingfield-Digby Collection, Tony Birks & Cornelia Wingfield-Digby. Alphabet & Image, 1992.

Bernard Leach: Life and Work, Emanuel Cooper. Paul Mellon Centre for studies in British Art, 2003.

Bernard Leach: Potter and Artist, Oliver Watson. 1997.

Beyond East & West: Memoirs, portraits and Essays, Bernard Leach.

David Leach: A Biography, Emmanuel Cooper. Richard Dennis, 2003.

Hamada, Potter, Bernard Leach.

Janet Leach: A Potter's Life, Emmanuel Cooper. Ceramic Review Publishing, 2006.

Shoji Hamada: Master Potter, Yuko Kikuchi and Julian Stair. Lund Humphries, 1998.

The Potter's Challenge, Bernard Leach.

The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight to Beauty. Soetsu Yanagi & Bernard Leach.

Thrown: British Columbia's Apprentices of Bernard Leach and Their Contemporaries, Glenn Allison. Black Dog Publishing, 2014.

Trevor Corser: His Life & Work. Leach Pottery, 2016

Online Ceramics Resources

Access Ceramics

Database of artist images

<http://accessceramics.org/>

Alfred University Raw Materials

Calculators and safety information for clay and glaze materials

<http://www.alfredgrindingroom.com/raw-materials/>

British Film Institute

Two short films about Leach & St. Ives

<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-father-of-british-studio-pottery-1978-online>

<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-freedom-of-st-ives-for-leach-and-hepworth-1968-online>

Ceramic Artists Now

Features contemporary ceramic artists

<http://ceramicartistsnow.com/>

Ceramic Arts Daily

Tips, tricks, resources, videos, links, forums, and more.

<http://ceramicartsdaily.org/>

Ceramics: Art and Perception

Australian quarterly scholarly magazine on ceramic art theory

<http://ceramicart.com.au/>

Ceramics Now

Bi-annual journal focusing on contemporary ceramics

<http://www.ceramicsnow.org/>

Ceramics Today

Blog-based collection of articles on a range of subjects

<http://ceramicstoday.com/>

CFile

Website associated with research Garth Clark

<https://cfileonline.org/>

Ceramics Research

Paul Mathieu's website offers a free download of his new book, *Art of the Future* is also available online!

<http://ceramicsresearch.ca/>

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?ddrp=1&id=0B7CyeIuUjShhYIVzOEEdLZ2NURjg>

Clay Art Discussion Threads

<http://www.potters.org/categories.htm>

Clay Times

Some useful content outside of the paid subscription

<http://www.claytimes.com/>

Craft Council of Ireland

Ceramics Education Resources

<http://www.dccoi.ie/learners/secondary/>

Culture Street Online Interactive Slip Decoration game

<https://www.culturestreet.org.uk/activities/slipdecorator/>

The Digital Museum of Cornish Ceramics

www.cornishceramics.com

Field guide for Ceramic Artists

How-to articles for students

<http://ceramicsfieldguide.org/>

Goldmark Gallery YouTube Channel

Beautifully filmed videos of studio potters

<https://www.youtube.com/user/GoldmarkGallery>

Musing About Mud

Blog focused on opportunities for ceramic artists

<https://www.musingaboutmud.com/>

NCECA YouTube Channel

Videos of past conference presentations, especially good for teaching pedagogy & techniques

<https://www.youtube.com/user/WatchNCECA>

Pottery Making Info

Blogs & resources, including a list of pottery podcasts

<http://www.potterymakinginfo.com/>

Pottery Studio

Extensive online database of British studio potters and potteries

<http://www.studiopottery.com/cgi-bin/makerindex.cgi?p1=0>

Sawdust & Dirt

 Leach Pottery

Useful list of potters who are on Facebook

<http://www.sawdustanddirt.com/p/facebook.html>

The Studio Potter

Archived articles from the magazine

<http://studiopotter.org/>

Studio Pottery UK

Directory of studio potters & events

<http://www.studiopottery.co.uk/>

Other Places to View Work

Aberystwyth University School of Art

Early British Studio Pottery Public Collection & Archive

<http://www.ceramics-aberystwyth.com/>

Contemporary Ceramics Centre

Exhibition showroom of the Craft Potter's Association

<http://cpaceramics.com/>

Crafts Study Centre

University museum open to the public, Leach archives and exhibitions

<http://www.csc.uca.ac.uk/>

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery

One of the largest collections of ceramics in the UK

<http://www.stokemuseums.org.uk/visit/pmag/>

Swindon Museum and Art Gallery

Begun as a teaching collection of 20th cent. work, also has a focus on west country potters

<http://swindonmuseumandartgallery.org.uk/museum/>

Victoria and Albert Museum

Extensive ceramics collections, including a gallery devoted to 20th century studio pottery

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/galleries/level-6/room-142-20th-century-studio/>

York Art Gallery Centre of Ceramic Art:

Extensive collection of Leach work and other 20th century studio potters

<https://www.yorkartgallery.org.uk/exhibition/centre-of-ceramic-art-coca/>

History of the Leach Pottery

The Leach Pottery is considered by many to be the birthplace of British studio pottery. One of the great figures of 20th century art, Bernard Leach played a crucial pioneering role in creating an identity for artist potters across the world.

The restored Leach Pottery site includes a museum, created to celebrate the life, work, influences and legacy of Bernard Leach. Exhibition, gallery and shop spaces provide regular shows throughout the year showcasing work by leading regional, national and international studio potters.

Early Years 1887 to 1909

Bernard Howell Leach was born Hong Kong on January 5th, 1887. As his mother died in child birth he was taken to Kyoto in Japan by his maternal grandparents. Four years later his father remarried and he brought Leach back to Hong Kong and then on to Singapore when he was appointed a judge.

In 1897 when Leach was 10 he was brought back to England by his Great Uncle Granville to attend Beaumont College – a Jesuit school – in Old Windsor. Leach left school at 16 having excelled only in drawing, elocution and cricket and enrolled at The Slade School of Art, London. In 1904 his father was diagnosed with liver cancer so Leach left The Slade to be with his father in Bournemouth. As his father was extremely ill Leach promised to seek a career in the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (HSBC). In November of that year, his father died.

When Leach was 18 he moved to Manchester to study for the bank entrance examination and stayed with his Uncle and Aunt. It was here that he met his cousin Muriel and fell in love with her. In 1906 he took up position as a junior bank clerk in the HSBC in London. However, he soon became disillusioned with banking and he was forbidden to pursue his relationship with Muriel. He therefore resigned from the bank and travelled to Dorset and North Wales to draw and paint. At 21 he inherited a modest income so enrolled at The London School of Art in Kensington where he was taught etching by Frank Brangwyn who was an inspiration to Leach.

Japan 1908 to 1920

Leach met Muriel again in 1908 and they became engaged and planned to marry. Leach decided to return to Japan and went ahead of Muriel with the intention of teaching the Japanese etching. Muriel joined him in Tokyo and they then married. Leach painted, etched, produced wood cuts and designs for art magazine covers. Muriel taught English.

David Andrew was born in 1911 and in this year Leach and a Japanese friend Tomimoto Kenkichi were invited to a raku party. He was enthralled by the firing process and wrote, "By this to me a miracle, I was carried away to a new world. Enthralled, I was on the spot seized with the desire to take up the craft". This was a pivotal time in Leach's life and he decided to follow the path of ceramics. He was recommended and then studied with Urano Shigekichi, known by his title of Kenzan VI, two days a week for two years.

He learnt throwing, brushwork decoration in the ancient style and different firing methods. He then set up a pottery in his garden and started to produce work to exhibit. In 1913 his second son William Michael was born. Leach had successful exhibitions in 1914 and published his first booklet, *A Review 1909-1914*. This booklet was issued to accompany the exhibition. However, he was becoming disillusioned with Japan and its growing westernisation so he moved to China alone and fell under the influence of Dr Alfred Westharp, a Prussian writer. On September 19th 1915 Eleanor, his first daughter, was born in Japan. Leach reluctantly returned to Muriel for Christmas but then went back to China with his family. However, Westharp caused friction and interfered in their family life although Leach was still under his demanding influence. Consequently, he set up home in Peking as medical help was needed for Michael.

Yanagi Soetsu – another friend of Leach from the Shirakaba group – visited and told him about his own visit to Korean potteries. This rekindled Leach's interest and Yanagi persuaded him in 1916 to return to Japan. A year later he set up a pottery on Yanagi's estate in Abiko. He developed his own style based on traditional Japanese, Chinese, Korean and English slipware. This gave him the satisfaction he had been seeking.

It was around this time that he met Hamada Shoji who became his soul mate. Unfortunately, in 1919 his pottery burnt to the ground. Viscount Kuroda – an artist trained in France – offered Leach a kiln in Tokyo with the help and assistance of professional potters so he could continue producing raku, stoneware and porcelain. He had a successful exhibition of his work and a small book *An English Artist in Japan* was produced by his friends to mark his impending departure from Japan. In the summer of 1920 Leach with Hamada set sail for England.

St. Ives & Dartington 1920 to 1944

Edgar Skinner – a friend of Leach's father introduced him to the St. Ives Guild of Handicrafts which was supported by local wealthy philanthropist called Francis Horne who lived at Tremorna in Carbis Bay. She offered him a capital loan of £2500 to set up his pottery with Hamada and also an assured income of £250 for 3 years. During this year Leach's twin daughters

Ruth Jessamine and Elizabeth Massey, known as Betty were born.

A site at the top of the Stennack was found, to build the pottery and the first climbing kiln and raku kiln. Bricks were used from the old dynamite works at Hayle. Hamada used iron barrel staves for arch support. In 1921 Leach and Hamada produce individual pieces of stoneware in the three-chamber, wood-burning climbing kiln. In the round, up-draught kiln they were making decorated earthenware dishes, slip decorated, lead-glazed tableware and raku. Trees and Rhododendron were used for firing and were brought down from Knill's Steeple.

The early firings were not successful as neither of them had much experience of controlled firing. Only 10 to 15% of the early pots were successful. It was also difficult to find a good clay body. They found earthen ware clay near St. Erth and obtained stoneware from Dorset and Ball clay from Devon. They burnt bracken for wood ash glazes and experimented widely adapting new materials and rediscovering old skills. In 1922 as the family was so much bigger as Leach and Muriel had five children, they moved to the Count House in Carbis Bay.

In 1923 Hamada returned to Japan as he was concerned about his family following the disaster of the Kanto earthquake. In the same year Michael Cardew joined the pottery. Leach continued to experiment with many forms and techniques. He held raku parties on Thursdays and Muriel served Cornish teas for 1 shilling (the equivalent of £1.50 today). They exhibited with no success initially but Leach joined many societies and groups and continued to exhibit. Matsubayashi – an excellent technician - arrived in St. Ives from Japan and was so appalled with the kiln he pulled it down and rebuilt it.

The first firing in the new kiln was in May 1924, during which, there was a ceremonial offering of salt. Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie joined the pottery as a paying student for one year along with Norah Braden. As others joined the pottery a strong sense of community arose although there were serious financial problems. In 1925 Leach met Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst at Dartington Hall in Devon. This American couple had a major impact on the development of the pottery in St. Ives and Leach's finance as Dorothy has inherited money from her family.

Michael Cardew left St. Ives in 1926 to set up his own pottery in Winchcombe, Gloucestershire. However, the pottery continued in financial difficulties so 'shares' were issued. In 1928 Leach published: *The Potter's Outlook*, Handworkers' Pamphlet No 3, (New Handworkers' Gallery) In 1930 both David Leach and Harry Davis – an accomplished young potter joined the pottery. Laurie Cookes joined the pottery a year later as a shop assistant and secretary. Soon after joining the pottery she started a relationship with Leach.

The Elmhirsts invited him to Dartington in 1932 to set up a pottery and also to teach. It was at Dartington that Leach met Mark Tobey – an American artist - who introduced him to the Bahá'í faith. Whilst Leach was at Dartington and on a lecture tour of Japan he left Harry Davis in charge at St. Ives. On his return from Japan Leach informed Muriel that their marriage was over. He then bought a caravan and toured England with Laurie Cookes in 1935. The couple settled in Dartington and built his pottery and a wooden house called 'The Cabin' in 1937.

Leach also started work on *A Potter's Book*, which was his most important publication. In 1938 David Leach returned to St Ives after studying pottery management for two/three years in Stoke-on-Trent. He initiated a wide range of changes. These included electricity, machinery and oil to fire the kiln which shortened the firing time by 20/25%. Leach Standard Ware was then produced in stoneware. There was now a permanent team that included William (Bill) Marshall who joined at age 14 and had a major influence on the pottery. In 1940 Faber and Faber published: *A Potter's Book* and Leach joined the Bahá'í faith.

David Leach was called up in 1941 and Leach returned to pottery and lived in Pottery Cottage which had been built in 1927. Unfortunately, a land mine destroyed part of Pottery Cottage and damaged part of kiln shed. However, the pottery continued production with a small team helped by conscientious objectors. Leach separated and divorced Muriel and then married Laurie in 1944 and the two of them adopted Maurice, an evacuee infant who she had taken care of during the war.

St Ives & International Tours 1945 to 1956

After the Second World War David Leach was made a partner in the pottery and consolidated the team with well-trained apprentices. The first catalogue of Standard Ware was issued in 1946. In the early 1950s Leach toured extensively in Scandinavia, USA and Japan. Meanwhile he passed the running of the pottery on to David. During his lecture tour of the USA - in 1953 - with Yanagi and Hamada, Leach met Janet Darnell – a young American potter. A year later they became intimate and planned to marry and live in Japan.

However, this was not to be and they returned to St. Ives. Muriel died in 1955 and in 1956 Leach divorced Laurie and married Janet who then took over the running of the pottery.

Honours & International Recognition 1957 to 1979

In the sixties Bernard travelled on many lecture tours and published more of his writings. He also received many honours both from home and abroad. In

1960 Bernard and Janet had a successful tour of USA. Faber and Faber also published 'A Potter in Japan'.

In 1961 The Arts Council of Britain held a retrospective exhibition 'Fifty Years a Potter'. Leach was acknowledged as a master craftsman and his work was accepted as the standard by which others were judged.

He also visited Japan, Australia and New Zealand. It was at this time that he bought a small flat in a new development called Barnaloft which overlooked Porthmeor Beach in St.Ives. Leach received the Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1962. In 1966 Faber and Faber published 'Kenzan and his Tradition, the lives and times of Koetsu, Sotatsu, Korin, and Kenzan'. In the same year Leach went on lecture tours to Venezuela and Colombia, Honduras, USA and Japan. In Japan he was awarded Order of the Sacred Treasure 2nd Class. This was the highest honour given to a non-national.

Leach travelled to Japan again in 1967 with Janet Leach. He stopped over in Hong Kong to search, unsuccessfully, for his mother's grave. In 1968 both Leach and Hepworth were bestowed the rare honour of Freedom of the Borough of St Ives by the Town Council. In the seventies Bernard published more of his writings. He received many more honours both from home and abroad In 1972 Kodansha published 'The Unknown Craftsman' translated and adapted from the work of Sōetsu Yanagi.

A year later, Adams and Dart published 'Drawings, Verse & Belief'. Leach was also made a Companion of Honour (CH) The Japan Foundation awarded Leach the equivalent of the Nobel Prize during his final visit to Japan in 1974. A sudden and dramatic loss of sight brought his potting days to an end. At the same time the large climbing kiln that was built in 1923 was used less and less due to less production and complaints from neighbours so a gas kiln was introduced. In 1975 Kodansha published 'Hamada: Potter'.

There was another Retrospective exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1977 in his 90th year. Bill Marshall left the Leach Pottery after 39 years of service, broken only by the war. He set up his own pottery at Abbey Cottage in Lelant with his son Andrew. 1978 Shoji Hamada died in Japan. Faber and Faber published Leach's last writings 'Beyond East and West: Memoirs, Portraits and Essays'. On May 6th, 1979 Leach died at St Michael's Hospital, Hayle after having had a heart attack in April of the same year. He was buried at Longstone Cemetery, Carbis Bay, St.Ives.

Leach Pottery 1979 to 2005

Following Bernard's death Janet Leach ceased production of the standard ware to focus on her own individual pots. She died in 1997, bequeathing the

Pottery to Mary Redgrave, who continued to run the Pottery until her own death. The building was sold to a private buyer, Alan Gilham, before being acquired by Penwith District Council as part of the Leach Restoration Project.

On completion the Leach Pottery was handed over to the Bernard Leach (St Ives) Trust Ltd., a registered charity which now manages the Leach Pottery as both a museum dedicated to Bernard Leach and the Leach legacy and as a working pottery studio, producing a new range of standard ware and training a new generation of studio potters.



Bernard Leach with Shoji Hamada & Soetsu Yanagi, Dartington 1952





Bernard Leach with grandparents in Japan



The Leach Pottery is managed by the Bernard Leach (St Ives) Trust Limited.

The stated objectives of the Trust are:

To advance the education of the public in Cornwall and elsewhere in the life and work of Bernard Leach, his influence on the development of the ceramic arts and in particular studio pottery and to preserve and maintain his former house and work place at Higher Stennack, St Ives to house and display examples of his work and those of others whose work in the Trustees' opinion may appropriately be displayed with the works of Bernard Leach and to train people in the art, craft and manufacture of pottery and related skills and increase the appreciation of the public in the ceramic arts.

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Edited by Jillian Echlin, October 2017