

## **How Dirt Changed Human Life: The impact of the Ceramic Process**

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This unit explores the ancient invention of the ceramic process, and the relationship man has had with this special dirt for centuries. Clay is an abundant natural resource that can be found all over the globe. In veins throughout the landscape and along riverbed, clay is the finest particle of soil and is commonly deposited by water. The invention of the ceramic process is chalked up to be a complete accident by every ancient culture individually. Ancient cultures used to line woven baskets with clay to help keep stuff in. Once the basket was worn out or used it was often tossed in the fire. After a night in the bonfire, ancient man woke up to find ceramic shards and a pile of ashes. Taking a look at pottery and the ceramic process over its lifetime, it developed alongside of agricultural society. As ancient man moved from a hunter/gatherer into a homestead and small civilization, new windows of opportunity and development opened. Ancient ceramics played an important role in food storage and cooking. The new ability to store liquid food allowed ancient man to discover fermentation and other preservation processes. Along with ancient discoveries, this lesson also highlights different types of clay available to the modern classroom, choice based pedagogy, and the role of self-directed learning in the classroom.