**CERAMICS CLASS VOCABULARY**

**BAT** - A slab or platform on which clay is handled; a circular device attached to the wheel-head.

**BISQUE** - Unglazed clay, fired once at a low temperature.

**BISQUE FIRING** - The process of firing unglazed clay to a low temperature to harden the clay and drive the physical water from it. The approximate temperature of this firing is 1815 F.

**BONE DRY** - Refers to clay which is ready to be fired. All the moisture is gone from the clay. Clay is VERY FRAGILE at this stage.

**CENTERING** - The act of aligning the clay on the potter's wheel in order to proceed with forming and shaping.

**CERAMICS -** The art of making things of clay.  Clay is an ancient tradition.  
  
**CLAY** – A decomposed granite-type rock. To be classified as clay the decomposed rock must have fine particles so that it will be plastic (see definition below). Clays contain impurities which affect color and firing temperatures.

**COILS** - Rope like pieces of clay.

**COIL CONSTRUCTION** – Rope like pieces of clay that are stacked to form a wall and build the object.  This technique is one of the most commonly used hand-building methods.

**FIRE** -  To bake in a kiln.  Firing is a term used for “cooking” the clay.

**FORM** -  Three-dimensional shape and structure of an object.

**GLAZE** - A glassy coating that has been melted onto a ceramic surface.  It is used to decorate the piece and to seal the clay surfaces.

**GLAZE FIRE** -  Much hotter than a bisque fire. Firing to temperature at which glaze melts to form a glasslike surface.

**GLAZE FIRING** - Typically the second firing of a piece pottery which has been coated with glass forming materials. The approximate temperature of this firing 2300.

**GLOSS** -  A shiny surface.

**GREENWARE** - Unfired pottery that is bone-dry, a state in which clay forms are the most fragile.

**HANDBUILDING** -  One of the oldest craft techniques in which objects are constructed entirely by hand.

**INCISING** -  Indenting a line into a flat surface.

**KILN** - Enclosed containers of various sizes- built of refractor brick and heated by electricity, gas, oil, or wood to temperatures from 1500 F. to 2340 F. in which ceramic ware is fired.  Also called the “oven” for firing the clay.

**LEATHER HARD** -  Refers to clay that is dry enough  but still damp enough to be joined to other pieces or carved without distortion. Clay at this state resembles leather.  Hard to bend and soft enough to be carved.

**MATTE** -  Not shiny.

**PLASTICITY** -  Quality of clay that allows it to be manipulated and still maintain its shape without cracking or sagging.

**POTS** - Have a function (use) like a pot or a bowl.

**POTTERY** -  Pottery was one of the first art forms explored by mankind. There are many extinct cultures throughout the world who did not leave behind any written record of their existence. For some of these civilizations the only evidence of their daily lives comes in the form of pottery. Some pots were for daily use and some were for ceremonial purposes. Some cultures buried their pots with their dead, and some had huge garbage dumps where broken pots ended up. Pottery and other forms of ceramics have left behind an important archeological record

**PRESS MOLD** - A  form which clay is compressed into, resulting in a repeatable shape or texture.  These are usually made of plaster. We used plastic bowls lined with cheesecloth as press molds.

**RAWWARE** – Unfired clay.

**SCORING** – Roughing up of the surface of clay for joining.

**SLAB** - Clay which has been made flat by rolling.

**SLAB CONSTRUCTION** -  Handbuilding technique in which flat pieces of clay are joined (clay is flattened and thinned with rolling pin or slab roller)

**SLIP** – A liquid form of clay used as a glue or as decoration.

**SLUMP MOLD** - A form which is used to support wet clay in the early stages of construction.  They are typically made of plaster.  We used plastic bowls covered with plastic or newspaper.

**STONEWARE** – A type of clay which is usually brownish or grey in color.  It is good for handbuilding and throwing because of its high plasticity. Our clay fires to cone 6.

**THROWING** – Forming clay on a potters wheel.

**UNDERGLAZE** - Colored decoration applied to bisqued clay, then coated with a clear glaze. Typically made of clay slip and raw pigment.

**WEDGING** - Method of kneading clay to make it homogenous; ridding the clay of all air pockets.