The following lessons were created by Mrs. Mary Barbara Summerfield, a teacher participating in a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers entitled Touch the Past: Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi River Region.

**Subject:** Art

**Grade Level:** 6-8th (This Project)

**Lesson Plan Title:** Discover Woodland Culture (Wisconsin) Basic Pottery Techniques

**Brief Description:**

1. Introduction  
   a. Vocabulary  
   b. Time Line  
   c. Techniques  
2. Process Raw Clay in the Woodland Culture Style  
   a. Harvest Clay  
   b. Process to Remove Impurities  
   c. Mix with Shell Temper to Improve Plasticity  
3. Create Clay Pinch Pot – Sun Bake  
   a. Clay Tools for Decoration  
   b. Burnish Pots  
4. Create Clay Coil Pot – Sun Bake  
   a. Clay Tools for Decoration  
   b. Burnish Pots  
5. Handouts  
   a. Drill Bow (Fire Starter)  
   b. Firing Process: Open Campfire

(Note: Please complete the blanks as appropriate for your state, standards and area of study).

**Concept/Topic to Teach:**

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

**Standards Addressed:**

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
Objectives:

Procedures:

*Step 1:* Students may be able to assist in this process depending on age, etc.
- Harvest clay in an area rich in ancient riverbed clay.
- Dry clay thoroughly...break into small pieces, if necessary.
- Pound or sift clay to remove heavy dirt clods and grasses.
- Soak clay in water for 2 to 4 days.
- Knead clay to further reduce clods.
- Stone crush mussel shells, or bake on a campfire and crush.
- Make clay slip.
- Optional: Crush a piece of red hematite. Mix with water.

*Step 2:*
- Prehistoric Clay Power Point Program
- Introduce or review basic clay terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clay</th>
<th>Fire</th>
<th>Clay Prehistoric Tool Kit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temper</td>
<td>Bisque</td>
<td>Paddle, Stones, Sticks, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slip</td>
<td>Burnish</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pigment</td>
<td>Wedge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hematite</td>
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*Step 3:*
- Discuss characteristics of Woodland pots; show slides if available.
- Show pictures/slides/models of pinch pots, if available.

*Step 4:* Have students mix shell tempera with raw clay until it becomes plastic, or manageable.

*Step 5:* Model making of basic pinch pots/students make pots. Model “painting” of decorations with slip or hematite solution.
- Start with a snowball shape.
- Pierce the center of the clay with a finger.
- Develop into a bowl shape.
- Tap bottom of pot to make a “foot.”
- Invite students to decorate pots.
- Students should carve initials into bottom of pots for easy identification.

*Step 6:* Clean-up.

*Step 7:* Sun bake the pots.
Optional Activity: Coil Pots
Note: Modern coil pots are started with a slab or flat base. Woodland culture pots may have started as pinch pots. Coils (snake-like shapes) would have been added as the pots reached a leather hard stage. Coils should be added until the desired height has been reached.

Model:
- The placement of coils on the lip of a pinch pot.
- Placing slip between each coil, and pushing the edges together with a tool such as a finger or a clam shell.

Step 1: Supplies
- Clay
- Clay Buckets
- Water
- Cleaning Materials: Water, Paper Towels, Handwipes

Steps 2 & 3:
- Prehistoric Clay Power Point
- Clay Tool Kit
- Models/Slides/Pictures of Pots

Step 4:
- Raw Clay
- Crumbled Shell Temper
- Clay Tool Kits
- Table Protection

Step 5: Students make pinch pots.

Step 6: Clean-up.
- Water, Paper Towels, Handwipes

Evaluation: