

Name:

## Clay Looms

Archeologists believe that weaving was an integral part of all developing civilizations. Because woven items are perishable (they decay or disintegrate over time), it is unknown how old weaving actually is. We are lucky to have found a few fabrics preserved by extreme or unusual circumstances. Cloth found in Egyptian tombs, imprints of weavings in clay pottery, and parts of weaving tools provide us with additional clues. Using the clues as a starting point, scientists use educated guesses to complete the history of weaving.

The first weavings likely began as ways to fulfill the needs of the people. By weaving fibers together, people could construct hunting and fishing nets, clothing, baskets, floor mats to insulate against the cold, and much more. (What other items might they have created by weaving?) Ancient civilizations might have been inspired to weave by things they saw in nature. What natural, animal-made, structures are woven?

As people practiced and perfected their weaving skills, they moved from hand-woven processes to using looms. The looms meant that finer cloth could be woven and fabric could be made more quickly.

They also began to embellish their work with dyes, patterns, and beadwork. These embellishments, or decorations, helped the weavers to express creativity and individuality.

For this project you will be creating your own loom out of clay. When you are finished with the loom you will be weaving into it with colored yarns.

What **elements** and **principles** of art will we be using?

# The Loom

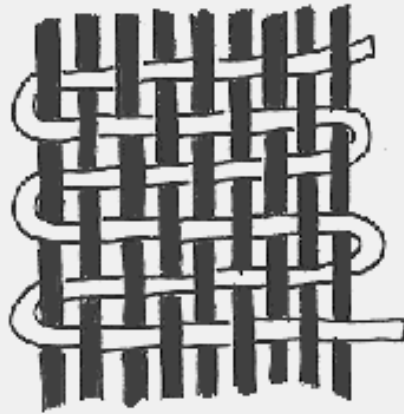
1. Roll out a thin even slab using a rolling pin and guide rails to ensure that it has the same thickness throughout.
2. Decide what **shape** your loom will be and cut off any extra clay. Will it be **organic** or **geometric**?
  - Keep extra clay to add embellishments!
3. Add **texture** to the slab by impressing objects or drawing into the clay.
4. Trace around a circle **template** (like a plastic lid or old cottage cheese container) in the center of your clay slab. Cut out the shape in the center of your slab. This will be where you incorporate the weaving into your artwork!
  - Make sure you are leaving **at least 1 ½ inches** of space between the edges of the circle and the edge of your slab!
5. After removing the shape from your slab, use a small sponge to clean the edges and remove little loose pieces of clay. Use a straw, wooden dowel, or end of a paintbrush to punch holes around the edges of the circular area you cut out of the slab.
  - Be sure to wipe the tool off in between punches, or squeeze the clay out of the straw, so the holes stay clean and free of debris!
  - Use an **ODD number of punches** (between 25 – 33) or the weaving will not work.
  - Make sure the holes are evenly spaced around the edge, and make sure they are not too close to the edge of the circle.
6. Shape the edges of your loom by curling, bending, cutting, etc. Decide if you would like to pierce areas of your loom by cutting out additional shapes. Consider giving your loom more **form** by adding shapes and piece using the **score and slip** method. Let your loom dry.
  - Clay is called **greenware** when it is in this stage.

- When the water has completely evaporated, we say that it is **bone dry**. Clay is the most fragile at this stage. It is important that we handle it with care.
7. When the clay has become bone dry, it will be placed in the kiln for the **bisque firing**. At this stage, the clay is called **bisqueware** and it is ready to be **glazed**. Glaze will help add **color** and shine to your loom.
- After your piece is glazed, it is ready for the **glaze firing**. Can you guess what it is called when it emerges from the kiln?

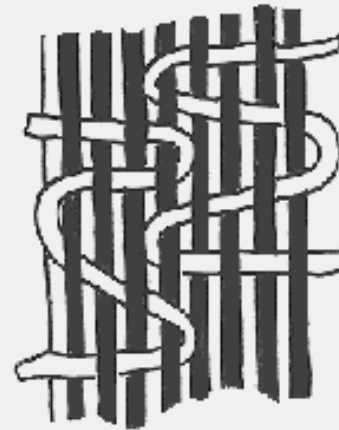
# Weaving

1. When your loom is finished, you will be ready to start weaving. Begin by **warping** the loom. (Ms. Wagner will demonstrate how to do this!)
  - Warps are the backbone structure that you will weave on.
2. Start weaving from the center of your circular loom! The threads you use to weave in and out of the warp threads are called the **wefts**.
  - Make sure you tighten your weaving with your fingers as you go.
  - You will also individualize your weaving with your color choices and patterns. Create designs by weaving the **weft** strands on only a few of the **warp** strands. What other objects or materials could you add to make your weaving more unique?
  - The illustration on the next page shows four different techniques or patterns you can incorporate. Keep in mind that these will look different in your weaving because your loom is a circle and not a rectangle!
3. When you start a new color you can tie the new weft strand to the old. Make sure to do this on the backside of your loom so the knot will not be visible.
4. The last strand should be tied to the back of your weaving.

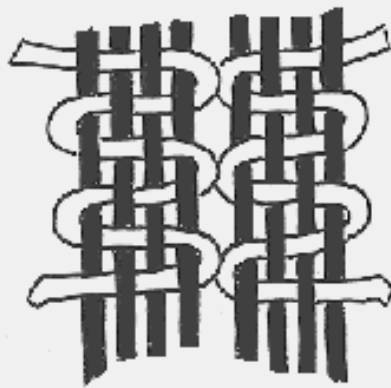
# Weaving Techniques



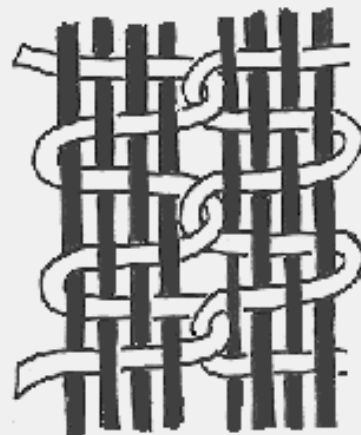
1 Plain Weave



2 DoveTail Join



3 Slits



4. INTERLOCKING