Name:
Hour:

**Spirit Vessels: Pottery of the Anasazi**

The Southwest Native Americans have been making hand built **ceramic vessels**, or pottery, for over 2,000 years. People from Mexico introduced the earliest coil pottery to the Native Americans. Anthropologists believe that a cook who lined a basket with clay and let it dry in the sun discovered ceramic pottery. When the basket got too close to the fire, the basket burned away and fired the clay. What tool (or machine) do we use to fire clay today? _________________

Today, the **Anasazi** people of the southwest continue to create pottery in the style of their ancestors. They have perfected the art of gathering clay and preparing it for coiling, they know how to create perfectly smooth forms of uniform thickness using only their hands, and they also know exactly which plants to harvest and collect to make dyes. They even know how to make their own paintbrushes to apply the dyes to their pottery. When the pots are complete, they build their own outdoor kilns to fire the clay in a process that takes an entire day.

**Decoration**

Native American **pueblo** people believe very strongly in the power of Mother Earth. The designs that adorn (or decorate) the pottery are inspired by **nature**. Images like clouds and sun are believed to encourage crop growth. These are **organic shapes**.

For this project you will be making your own **Spirit Vessel** similar to those made by Native Americans in the southwest. You will be watching a video that shows how traditional coil pottery is made. Then, following a series of demonstrations, you will design and create your own hand built ceramic vessel. We will be following some of the traditional techniques, but will be putting our own spin on them as well.
**FIRST:** What natural, or *organic*, objects describe your soul, spirit, and personality? Brainstorm and sketch ideas in the box below.

**SECOND:** create 4 thumbnail sketches of ideas for your Spirit Vessel. You will need to use both **additive** and **subtractive** techniques. Think carefully about how you can incorporate added pieces and carved away areas into your design. Remember to consider the inside of your vessel and how designs and forms might wrap around the edges towards the interior. Think also about the **shape** or 3-D **form** your spirit vessel will take.
Ceramic Vocabulary

**Slab** – a piece of clay that has been flattened using a rolling pin. A slab has the same thickness throughout the piece of clay.

**Coil** – a rope of clay made by rolling clay between the hands.

**Score** – scratches made in the clay before joining two pieces together.

**Slip** – watered down clay that acts as a glue to join two pieces of clay. Slip is added on top of scored areas before the clay is joined.

**Additive** – joining clay forms onto a clay body or vessel to create design.

**Subtractive** – drawing into the clay body, or carving away clay, to create a design.

**Plasticity/ Malleable** – clay in it’s wet workable stage.

**Leather hard** – clay that has not dried completely, but is fairly firm. Leather hard clay can still be carved and smoothed easily.

**Bone Dry or Greenware** – clay that has dried completely, but has not been fired.

**Bisque Fired** – clay that has been fired once. It will be hard and white (not gray like the clay in it’s leather hard and malleable stage).

**Glaze Fired** – clay that has been decorated with underglazes and overglazes. Generally glaze fired clay is shiny and watertight.