

CLAY

Materials List:

Air-dry clay: Air-dry clay is available in white, grey, or red (often called terracotta) colors. Clay typically dries overnight, but this depends with every brand. For a full list of air-drying clays, click [here](#).

Tools such as plastic silverware or toothpicks: Be creative with your tools. Find objects around the house that you can use to make patterns on clay.

Water: Add water to the clay if it becomes too dry. Keep it in a plastic cup while working with clay.

Tips for working with clay:

- Make sure to keep the rest of the unused clay moist in an air-tight plastic bag.
- Experiment with different kinds of clay. There are several types of non-toxic clay, including [paper clay](#) and [polymer clay](#).
- Keep in mind the historical context of clay. Clay was originally used by ancient civilizations to make pots and other household tools. They were also used to make objects for ceremonial rites. Noguchi was particularly inspired by [Haniwa](#), figures used in funerary rituals in Japan.
- Store your finished piece in a cool, dry area. Let it cure and harden.
- As clay dries, a piece might break off. You can use glue to attach the broken piece after your artwork completely dries.

Explorations:

Take a piece of clay (a piece around 3 inches in diameter) and experiment:

- Shape the clay. Smoosh it flat against the table. Roll it into a skinny rope. Mold it into a perfect cube or sphere.
- Make textures on the clay. With a chopstick, poke holes into the clay. With the palm of your hand, press against the clay and make an impression of your palm. Make patterns on the clay using a plastic fork.

“Working in clay did not satisfy me ... Because in a medium like clay anything can be done, and I think that’s dangerous. It’s too fluid, too facile ... It’s more like painting. The very freedom is a kind of anti-sculpture to me. When I work with a material like stone, I want it to look like stone. You can make clay look like anything – that’s the danger.”

– Isamu Noguchi