Clay is a naturally occurring earth material that can be shaped or molded by adding water. Did you know that in certain places you can dig up clay that’s ready to be sculpted? Clay forms naturally in lake bottoms and marine deposits. Early humans in prehistoric times discovered the useful properties of clay. One of the earliest artifacts ever uncovered is a drinking vessel made of sun-dried clay! Working with clay also has therapeutic benefits and can help reduce stress, foster creativity and promote socialization. How do you feel when working with clay? What do you like best about handling this material? We will create clay pinch pots in this project, which can help us feel both calm and creative.

**SUPPLIES**
- Clay (homemade or store-bought)
- Water

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**Step 1:** Separate a palm-sized piece of clay. With the piece of clay between your palms, begin to roll the clay into a ball. Try to make it as round and symmetrical as possible. This repetitive motion can create a calming and meditative state.

**Tip:** The firmness of your clay will determine how much pressure you need to apply when forming your ball.

**Step 2:** Start your pinch pot. Once you are satisfied with your ball, poke a hole in it using your thumb. **Tip:** Your hole should go a little more than halfway through the ball.

**Step 3:** Begin pinching your clay into a pot. Use your fingers to pinch your clay up and away from the center hole. As you’re pinching, focus on relaxing as you rotate your ball in your other hand to create evenness in the shape and size of your pinch pot. Continue this pinching process until you are content with the width and size of your pot. **Tip:** Avoid making the walls of your pinch pot too thin, especially near the base, and try to keep the wall width even from the base to the top edge.

**Step 4:** Shape or design your pinch pot. Once you make the walls of your pinch pot an even thickness, you can either shape your pot or continue the meditative process of smoothing out the walls and making the pot as symmetrical as possible.

**To watch this process, visit**
youtube.com/PeabodyEssexMuseum

**SHOW US!**
We want to see your clay pinch pots. Share your photos online using #PEMpod or #peabodyessex.