

The Clay

Campaign Manual



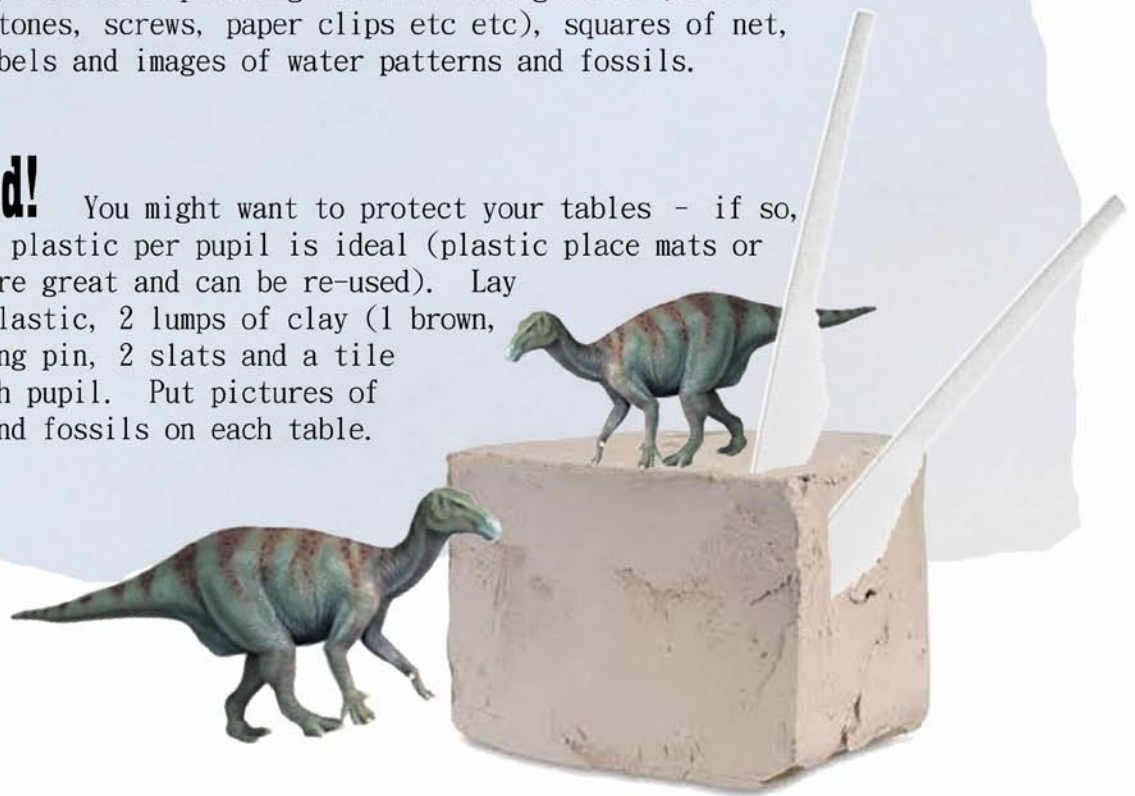
Venture into the High Weald with Clay in 1 hour

Things you'll need:

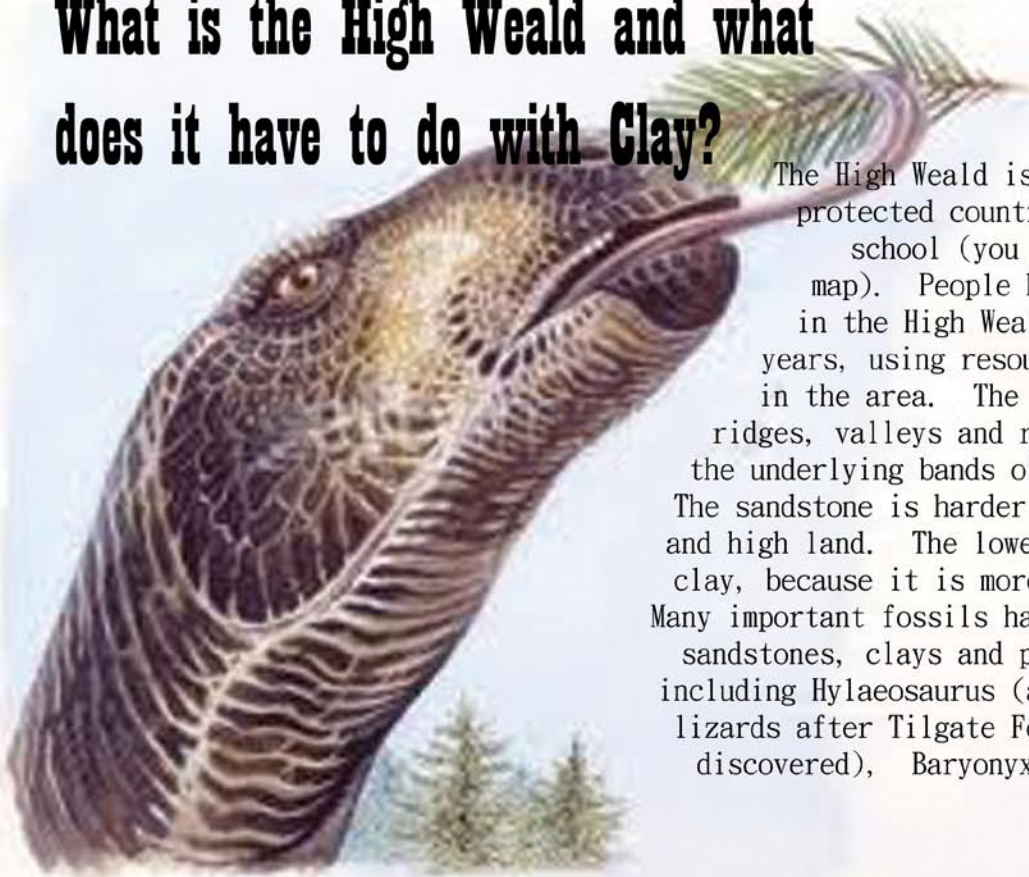
Air dry clay (brown and grey), wooden slats (5-7mm thick), rolling pins, plastic, tile templates, clay cutters (plastic knives will do), viewfinders, collected pressing and mark making items (such as leaves, cones, stones, screws, paper clips etc etc), squares of net, small luggage labels and images of water patterns and fossils.

Get prepared!

You might want to protect your tables - if so, a small piece of plastic per pupil is ideal (plastic place mats or binding covers are great and can be re-used). Lay out a piece of plastic, 2 lumps of clay (1 brown, 1 grey), a rolling pin, 2 slats and a tile template for each pupil. Put pictures of water patterns and fossils on each table.



What is the High Weald and what does it have to do with Clay?



The High Weald is a beautiful area of protected countryside close to this school (you could show it on a map). People have lived and worked in the High Weald for thousands of years, using resources found naturally in the area. The High Weald gets its ridges, valleys and rolling landscape from the underlying bands of sandstone and clay. The sandstone is harder and forms the ridges and high land. The lower land is formed of clay, because it is more easily worn away. Many important fossils have been found in the sandstones, clays and ponds of the Weald, including Hylaeosaurus (also known as forest lizards after Tilgate Forest, where it was discovered), Baryonyx and Iguanodon.

Get your Artists started...

The first task is to combine the brown and grey clay. Push them together and roll them into a ball, either on the table or between your palms.

Throw the clay from a **SHORT** distance onto the table several times - this helps to push out any air pockets and will make your tiles stronger. Now reshape into a ball - you should start to get some swirly patterns where the two colours of clay have mixed.

Put the piece of net in the middle of your piece of plastic and press your ball of clay down in the centre of it to form a thick disc. Now place the two slats on either side of the disc - these will ensure that your tile comes out an even thickness.



Now we begin rolling, so **STAND UP!**

The trick to rolling is not to try and get to your final thickness in the first roll....

Roll **LIGHTLY** across the entire piece of clay in one direction, then turn the plastic and roll in the opposite direction. If you do this, your disc should grow evenly in all directions, making a piece large enough for your tile.

Make sure your rolling pin stays on the slats at all times or your tile will be uneven. Keep turning and rolling until all the clay is the same thickness as the slats. Now do a bit more! It often looks completely flat, but still has a few thick bits.

Place your template on the clay... is your clay large enough to cut out your tile? Try turning the template different ways to ensure the clay reaches all the corners. Once you are happy, cut around the tile template and carefully peel away the excess. Try not to press too hard on the template or it will stick to the tile.

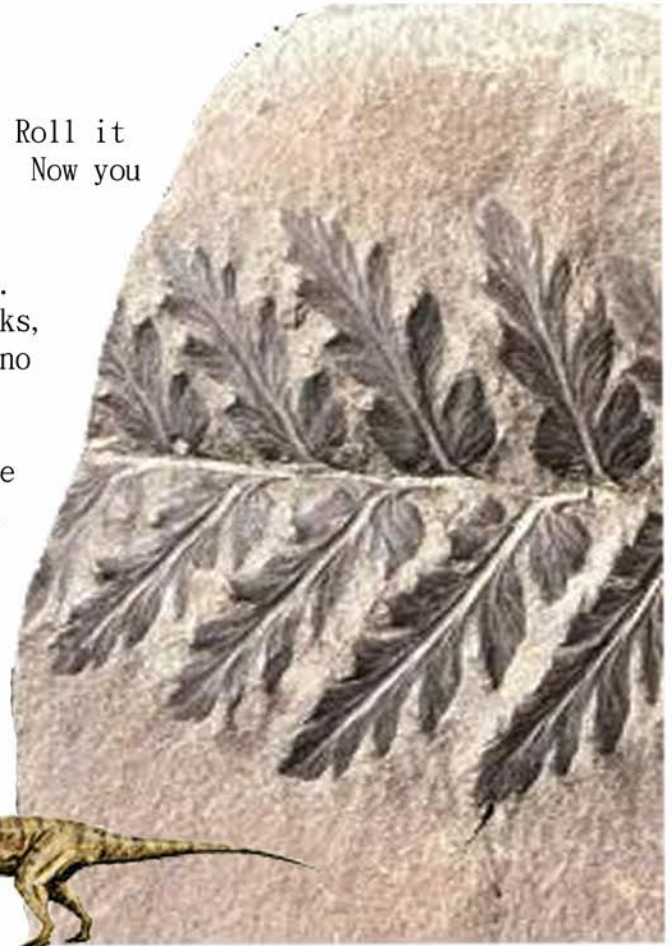
Pattern press experiments

Take the leftover clay and roll it into a ball. Roll it out between the slats as you did with your tile. Now you have somewhere to experiment.....

Look at the images of water patterns and fossils. Some areas will have very clear patterns and marks, others will be more subtle. Some areas may have no pattern or marking at all.....

Use the viewfinders to select an area of an image you want to try and recreate and experiment with the mark making tools on your spare clay. Practice making patterns and marks with both natural and man-made tools. Try pressing, dragging, laying on and rolling over (great for leaves) and repeating marks.

You can ball up your practice clay and roll it out again to try different areas selected with the viewfinders. Practice marking without going more than half way through the clay.



Top Tiles.....

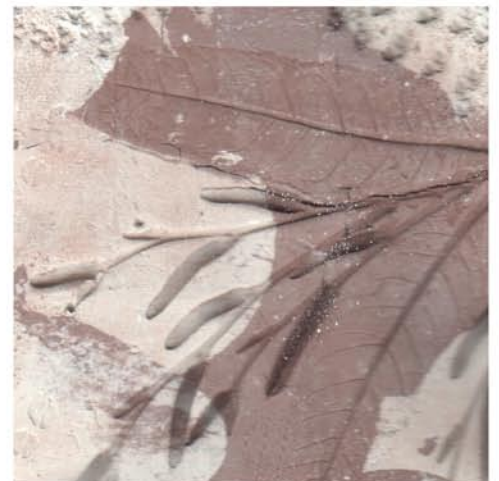


Make your final selection with the viewfinders. As your tile already has a pattern in the brown and white clay, think about areas you will leave unmarked. Now make your final impression!

If you are rolling over leaves, you may find that the tile spreads noticeably. Just re-trim using the template for a slick finish. Then the piece of willow to make a hole in one corner.

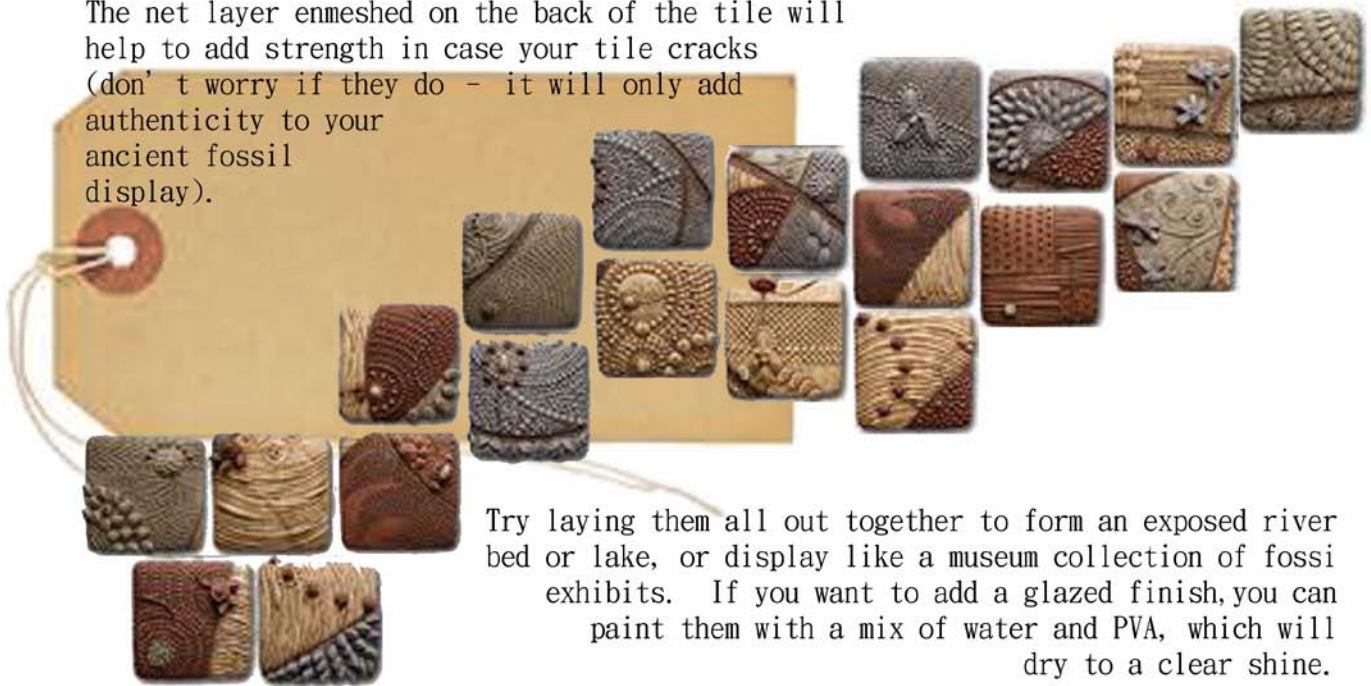
Your tile is almost complete..... **GENTLY** peel the plastic off the back and place the tiles on a sheet of cardboard - this will help the bottom to dry at the same speed as the top and will encourage them to stay flat. Depending on conditions, they will dry in 24-48 hours.

Now to document your find.... write details of your fossil, where it was discovered etc on a luggage label. Once the tile is dry, make a hole through the net with a pen tip and tie on your fossil label.



Fragile Fossils

Untreated air dry clay can be very brittle and a bit crumbly compared to kiln-fired ceramics, so if you want to display your pieces they will need handling with care. The net layer enmeshed on the back of the tile will help to add strength in case your tile cracks (don't worry if they do - it will only add authenticity to your ancient fossil display).



Try laying them all out together to form an exposed river bed or lake, or display like a museum collection of fossil exhibits. If you want to add a glazed finish, you can paint them with a mix of water and PVA, which will dry to a clear shine.

Adapt your tile techniques

Now you've mastered your tile making techniques, they are easy to adapt to other purposes.

Fancy a nice set of coasters? Cut a round shape instead of a square (or a fancy shape of your choice) and decorate the surface with patterns. Now for a dash of excitement... use a sprinkle of glitter or glitter glue to add a sparkle to your coasters. Once dried, coat with a clear furniture varnish to protect from tea dribbles.

How about making a small hole in the coaster to turn it into an ornament? Simply thread some ribbon or cord through the hole so it can be hung up (just remember the clay is quite heavy!). Try pressing a rubber stamp into it for perfect designs... great for jewellery or ornaments.

And if you get more adventurous....

Try embedding found objects.

A wire armature helps sculptures stand up without a wide base.

As air dry clay is not too hard, you can sand, carve or drill it once dried too.



Mud Pies

You can easily make your own version of air-dry clay with simple ingredients.

Things you'll need:

3 cups of water, 2 cups corn flour, 4 cups baking soda, waxed paper, paper towels, airtight container or plastic bag.

Step 1: Put the corn flour and baking soda into a large saucepan and mix them together.

Step 2: On a medium heat, stir constantly while adding a little water at a time. It will be very smooth and thin to start.

Step 3: When it thickens to the point where you can't stir it, it's done. Put it on the waxed paper and cover with a wet paper towel so it doesn't dry out.

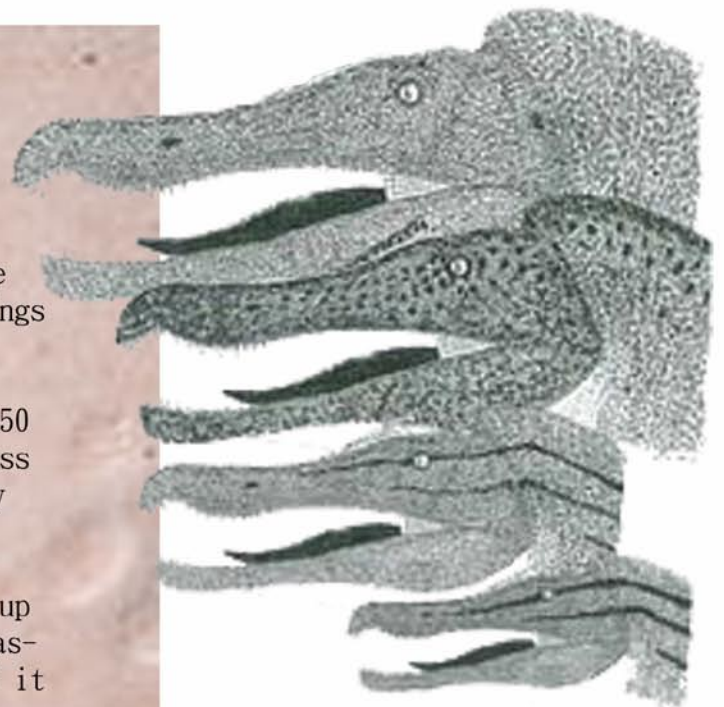
Step 4: After it cools down, knead the clay until it feels smooth to the touch.

Top Tips

Drying time will vary depending on the thickness of the item you make. Most things will be dry in about 24-48 hours.

You can put the clay into the oven at 350 degrees if you want to hasten the process with thick pieces, but it will air dry fully if you are patient.

Clay will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Seal it in a zipper type plastic bag, pressing most of the air out of it before you seal it. You can also freeze it....



Marvellous Modelling

You can try making modelling clay too (this stuff doesn't dry out).

Things you'll need:

2 cups white flour, 1 cup salt,
4 tsp cream of tartar, 2 cups cold water, 2 tbsp vegetable oil,
food colouring, waxed paper, airtight container

Step 1:

Put a few drops of food colouring, the oil and water into a pan.

Step 2:

Mix the flour, salt and cream of tartar. Add this to the liquid in the pan and heat until the mixture pulls away from the sides of the pan and looks doughy. Turn it out onto the waxed paper.

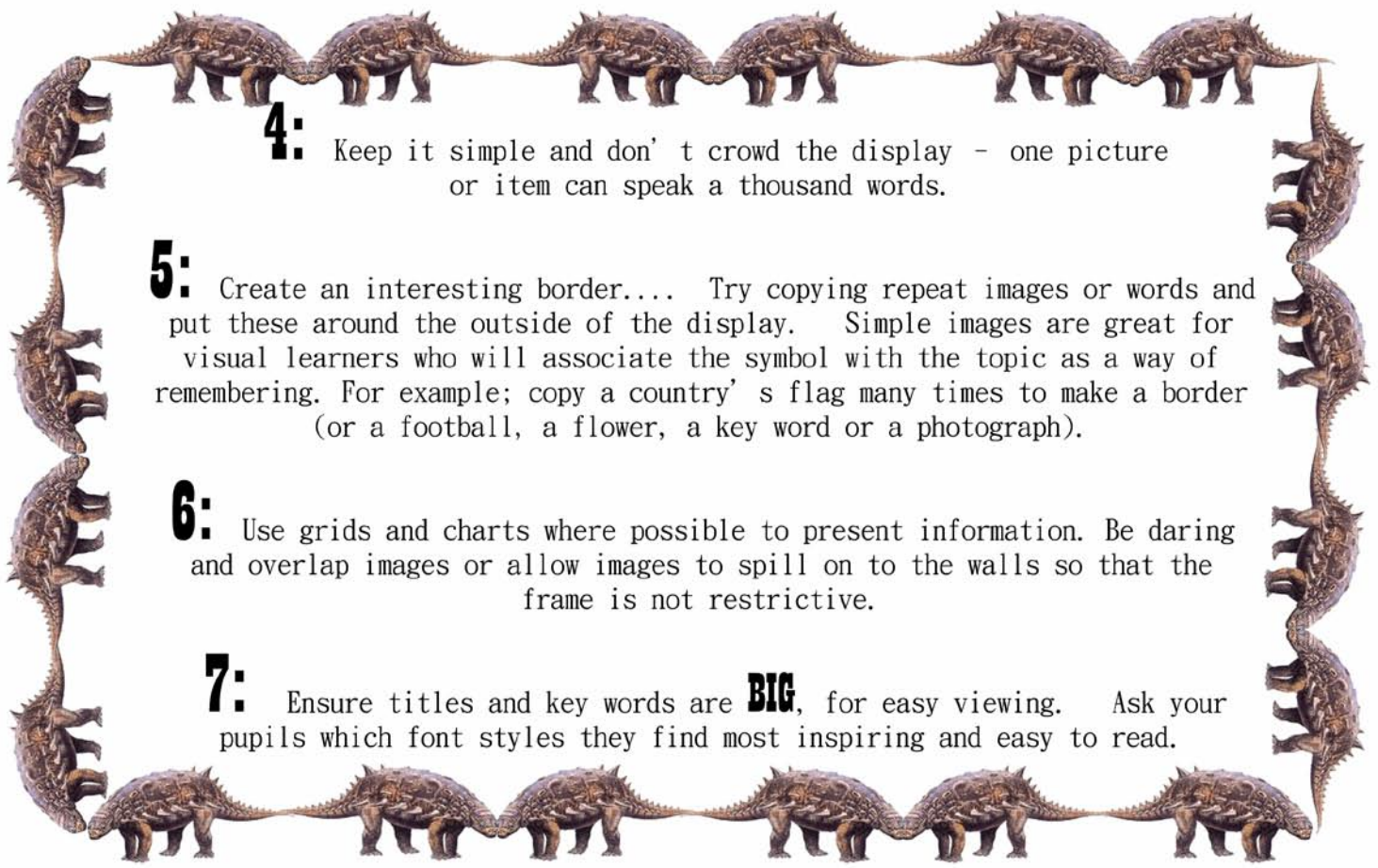
Step 3:

Allow it to cool then knead it until smooth. Use it straight away or place in an airtight container and keep in the fridge.

Dastardly Display Ideas

Now comes the challenge of how to display your wonderful work. Here are some useful display for learning techniques...

- 1:** Strip your board or table of the previous display. However tempting it is to cover over previous displays to save time, old staples and bits of card will poke through so start afresh.
- 2:** Use complementary colours - back the display with a bright colour and try using a colour wheel to select opposite colours for borders. Avoid beige and white card if you can...
- 3:** Try backing resources twice - use two shades of coloured card and ensure the border is an equal width around the outside.



4: Keep it simple and don't crowd the display - one picture or item can speak a thousand words.

5: Create an interesting border.... Try copying repeat images or words and put these around the outside of the display. Simple images are great for visual learners who will associate the symbol with the topic as a way of remembering. For example; copy a country's flag many times to make a border (or a football, a flower, a key word or a photograph).

6: Use grids and charts where possible to present information. Be daring and overlap images or allow images to spill on to the walls so that the frame is not restrictive.

7: Ensure titles and key words are **BIG**, for easy viewing. Ask your pupils which font styles they find most inspiring and easy to read.

8: Encourage displays with a 3D element - pupils are drawn to textural displays with items they can touch and it is important not to be too precious.

9: Remember the ceiling and space below it. It is simple, quick and cheap to hang things from the ceiling - 3D items, images, words, pictures and sequences.

10: Make classroom displays interactive tools for learning by using velcro pads. Level descriptors and images can be peeled off as a lesson starter or discussion tool.

11: Make space in classrooms for temporary exhibitions. They can support learning on a specific topic and are a powerful aid for kinaesthetic and all other learners.

And finally, try to **ENJOY** displaying it!
After all, you did such a good job making it.....



Resources

Scola air dry clay - www.craftmill.co.uk
Wooden slats (5-7mm thick) - builders merchants
Rolling pins (chunky dowel) - builders merchants
Viewfinders - make your own
Net - cheap at most fabric stores
Corn flour, baking soda, waxed paper - supermarkets
Cream of tartar, vegetable oil, food colouring - supermarkets
Zipper plastic bags - www.viking-direct.co.uk

Created by Bec Britain and Sharon Mee for the High Weald Heroes Programme
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