

VMFA TAKE & MAKE

Ancient Greek Pottery: Can You Dig It?

Like most societies, ancient Greeks used clay as a cheap and durable material to make plates, cups, pitchers, bowls, and storage vessels. The fanciest vessels were decorated with pictures of gods, heroes, animals, and daily life. Many of these pots were practical, but they were often discarded, lost, or placed in tombs as grave offerings. Centuries later, when archaeologists—people who study past cultures and civilizations—find these pots, they are often broken into fragments and missing parts. Through careful study and patience, many of the pots can be reassembled, allowing archaeologists and other scholars to learn more about how the ancient Greeks lived and what they believed.

DIRECTIONS

1. If possible, print the vase image (on back) on thicker paper (to prevent the pieces from curling when they are cut later). Draw a picture on the vase using red- and black-colored pencils.
2. Using kid-friendly scissors, cut out the vase, and then cut along the dotted lines to create broken pieces.
3. Place the pieces on a flat surface and arrange them as if you were putting together a puzzle.
4. Once you have “restored” your vase, either keep the pieces in an envelope to put them back together again later, or glue them to a piece of paper to keep them in place!



Black-figured amphora showing Herakles fighting a Lion, 6th century BCE, attributed to painter of the "E Group," (Greek), terracotta, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund

