



Make your own plaster casts

with salt dough and plasticine

The Museum of Classical Archaeology is a cast gallery. This means all of our statues are copies of other statues made out of plaster. The process of making them is called plaster casting. In this activity we will show you how this works using household objects.

*Museum of Classical Archaeology
Cambridge*



Making your own casts is a three part process. First, we will make moulds using salt dough. Then we will cast our objects using plasticine. This activity can take a few hours, make sure you read the instructions before starting!



- Things you will need:
- objects you want to cast
 - bowl
 - spoon
 - baking sheet
 - baking paper
 - cup of flour
 - half a cup of salt
 - half a cup of water
 - flour for sprinkling
 - plasticine or play-dough



Part 1: Choosing objects to cast.



Think of different shapes and textures that will show well in the salt dough and plasticine. Objects that are big or heavy will be very difficult to get out of the mould. We choose a selection of jewellery because of their patterns, a few buttons and keys.

Try feeling the object with your fingers. If it feels bumpy the pattern will show up in the mould! The objects are likely to get a bit messy with flour and plasticine. Try picking ones which will clean easily.



Part 2: Making the Moulds

As long as you use the same size cup to measure these ingredients, the proportions will stay the same and the salt dough will turn out fine. By the end of this part you should have a negative of your objects.

1. Mix half a cup of salt and a cup of flour in the bowl.
2. Add water bit by bit and stir with a spoon until it comes together into a ball. The dough will be sticky.
3. Flour your work surface
4. Tip the salt dough out of the bowl onto your work surface.
5. Take a piece of the dough, roll it into a ball which is bigger than your object. Put on baking paper.



6. Press your object into the dough. Make sure it's pressed quite deep. Take the object out. (You might have to flour the dough and the object to make it easier to take out).
7. Experiment! Try different objects, press them to different depths, and try different thickness of the dough.
8. Transfer the baking paper onto a baking sheet and put in the oven.
9. Turn the oven onto its lowest setting and bake for about 3 hours.
10. Take out and let cool (ideally overnight).



Part 3: Casting!

This is the fun part where you see how your moulds turned out. We baked some of ours at a high temperature and they lost their shape and burned! Use different colours of plasticine for extra fun!

1. Clean any flour left on the dough moulds.
2. Take a bit of plasticine and press carefully into the mould. Check that the plasticine fully covers the imprint of the object. It can help to add a small handle at the top.
3. Carefully lift the plasticine from the mould. Start at the edges or lift by the plasticine handle.
4. Done! You now have a plasticine cast of your object!



Experiment!

Extra step: If you are feeling brave, try filling your moulds with different kinds of materials that might make a better cast. Or, make it the other way around. Use plasticine to make moulds, and salt dough to make casts! Why not share your casts with us on Twitter or Facebook?

Some of our best attempts



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