

Appalachian Center for Crafts - Clay Studio

Vince Pitelka, 2015

Art 3520 - Advanced Clay Studio - Surface Design Decorating Slip Consistency Based on Water Content

The working consistency of decorating slips determined by water content is critical in any slip-decorating technique, as the surface effects will change dramatically as slip consistency changes. Some decorating techniques are possible only with thick slips, others with medium or thin slips. The following chart is based on the performance of average porcelaineous decorating slips and does not apply to deflocculated slips or to terra sigillata and other particle-refined slips. Amounts are given for 100-gram samples of dry base slip in order to simplify the task of multiplying the recipe for your particular needs. The second column indicates the amount of water added, the third indicates the percentage of water added to the dry batch (% of the dry batch weight), and the fourth the percentage water in the mixed batch. In each case, approximate characteristics and possible uses are given at the right.

Slip Consistency Chart				
<i>Dry Mix</i>	<i>Water</i>	<i>% of Dry</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	<i>Slip Characteristics</i>
100 g.	40 ml.	40%	28.6%	Very soft claybody - modeling, texturing
100 g.	50 ml.	50%	33.3%	Stiff paste - modeling, texturing with palette knife
100 g.	60 ml.	60%	37.5%	Paste/slurry - textural painting, texturing with brush or palette knife
100 g.	70 ml.	70%	41.2%	Medium slurry - textural painting, stippling, layering, sgraffito, thick trailing, tube-lining, texturing
100 g.	80 ml.	80%	44.4%	Thin slurry - textural painting, stippling, layering, sgraffito, thick/medium trailing, tube-lining
100 g.	90 ml.	90%	47.4%	Thin slurry - painting, sgraffito, medium trailing
100 g.	100 ml.	100%	50.0%	Barely pourable - painting, sgraffito, medium/thin trailing
100 g.	120 ml.	120%	54.5%	*Pourable - thin painting, sgraffito, thin trailing, marbling, feather combing
100 g.	140 ml.	140%	58.3%	Liquid - very thin painting
100 g.	160 ml.	160%	61.5%	Very liquid - translucent patina/wash effect

* Might require slight adjustment of water content for techniques that require separate colored slips to intermingle without intermixing, as in feather combing and marbling. For those effects, the slip must be liquid enough so that it will seek its own level in its container after it is disturbed. In other words, when you draw a brush through the surface of the slip in the container, the slip should return to completely level, leaving no raised "wake." Add water very slowly to reach this point, because adding even slightly will cause the slips to intermix and bleed into one another spontaneously when laid in adjacent areas.