



Clear Glazing at Cone 6

Using clear glazes at cone 6 starts with your choices.

which project, which clear glaze, and which clay you'll use for the project. They all have to work together to get the results you want for your work. Several things factor into working with cone 6 clays and glazes. The clay takes on a much greater role in your finished piece as the glaze color, the clay color, the clay surface, and the fit of the glaze to the clay body all play roles in the final outcome.

Successful cone 6 glaze work starts with correctly fired bisque

Your target temperature for mid-range work is bisque firing to cone 04. With a cone 6 clay, this temperature leaves the clay not fully matured, creating a porousness that allows the glaze to penetrate and interface with the clay body.

Clear (transparent) glazes at cone 6 are often formulated either WITH or WITHOUT zinc. Zinc helps the glaze fit, but can compromise and change underglaze colors. Consider this example plate made with Georgies' PG629 Super-Clear and PG630 Zinc-Free Clear.



Look closely at the orange line for EZ058 Poppy Orange, and the bottom two lines for EZ105 Neon Green and EZ016 Grass Green. See how EZ058 is brighter, but EZ105 and EZ016 turn brown when zinc is present in the glaze?

This demonstrates why we often say that when it comes to ceramics ... "Everything matters, and nothing is the same.

Last but not least, there is the question of application.

Clear glazes like and require a lighter approach:

they like thin applications. How you achieve that will depend on your glazing style. If you glaze heavily, with a loaded brush that lays down a flowing coat, you may want to thin the glaze to skim milk consistency. If you brush and stretch out each stroke, however, you should not thin the glaze. By applying two thin coats cross-hatched to each other, with the brushstrokes of the second coat turned 90° across the brushstrokes of the first coat, you achieve a more even overall application.

And if you work with detailed underglaze designs, it's best to sponge on that first glaze coat. No smears, no runs, no pulls and no dragging of the colors!