

Indian Block Prints

Overview

Students will use the ideas, themes and elements from a story to design a unique printing block. By developing just one design, students have the opportunity to examine which elements of the story impact them the most. This can range from how characters or artwork from the book made them feel to situations they related to most in the story.



Standards

This craft project aligns with the following national standards, as outlined by McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning).

www.mcrel.org

- Visual Content Standard 1
- Visual Arts Standards 1, 3 and 4

Cultural Influence

Wooden block printing has been used for thousands of years in India to create beautiful designs in relief. Early printing in India is thought to have been done on fabric using natural dyes in the colors of yellow, red, blue and saffron (which is a golden yellow-orange). Block printing is often used as a way to create intricate, yet repetitive, designs.

Historically, evidence of block printing can be found in many parts of the world, including Europe and China. This type of print-making helped to lay the foundation for the creation of the printing press and modern-day printing.

While printing has evolved, the artistic tradition of block printing in India still remains, and it is appreciated as an art form in today's culture worldwide.

Time

One to two class periods

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Materials

- Styrofoam trays
- One 6" x 6" inch piece of cardboard for each student
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Glue
- Paper
- Paint
- Pie tins or paper plates

Project Directions

- Cut a 5" square out of a flat portion of a Styrofoam tray.
- Glue the Styrofoam block to a 6" square of cardboard.
- Let glue dry completely.
- Use a pencil to draw your design into the Styrofoam block. Since print blocks are a relief (with the part creating the image standing out), all areas that should NOT print need to be pressed down into the Styrofoam.
- Pour paint into a pie tin or paper plate.
- Lightly dip block into paint.
- Press block firmly onto paper, ensuring that the entire surface makes contact.

Teacher Preparation

- Select a book from **We Give Books** (www.wegivebooks.org).
- Collect all required materials.
- Create at least one block for demonstration purposes.

Note: The first step of this project is to glue the Styrofoam block to the piece of cardboard. This step of the project may be done in advance in order for the glue to dry completely.

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Classroom Instruction

- Direct your web browser to the **We Give Books** website at www.wegivebooks.org.
- Log in to your account and select a campaign to support.
- Choose a book to read and click the orange “Read Online” button to open it.
- Read your selected book to the students.
- After reading the selected book, have students close their eyes and picture one story element that stands out to them.
- Read the Cultural Influence section above to students.
- Let students know that they are going to translate the image they pictured to their printing block. Ask students: What does it mean to make a relief? How is this different from simply drawing a picture? How can you communicate your ideas to others using only one color? How detailed do you believe your blocks can become?
- Demonstrate the project using the block that has already been created. Make sure to demonstrate how to create the pattern by adding more detail to the demonstration block.
- Have students carve their blocks and create their prints.

Ideas for Display

- Display students’ block prints along with a short explanation of why each student chose to design the block the way he or she did.