

**Ben Uri Gallery  
Art Skills for Teachers**

Printing



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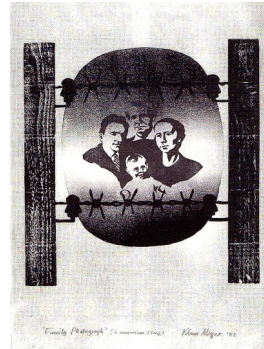
# Ideas for Printing in the Classroom

Printing can be fun! It is a great way of creating some interesting and effective work.

The simplest of prints can be made with just finger tips or hands. A multitude of objects can also be used for printing patterns, such as cut hard vegetables like carrots and potatoes, man-made objects such as plastic cups and corks, and found objects such as leaves and old toys.

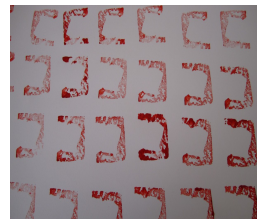
# Block Printing

Block printing literally means a print that is made by carving a design into a block of something. This could be a block of wood, lino, polystyrene or a potato. The technique can be used in the classroom really easily with children of all ages.



*Family photograph (in memoriam 1942)*  
Klaus Meyer, 1918—2002

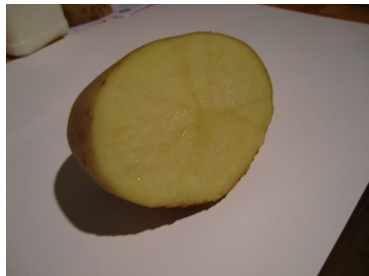
*(Relationships Teaching Pack)*



Find out how to make these  
fantastic potato prints over the page!

## Block Printing with Potatoes

For younger children the shapes will need to be pre-cut. Cut the potato in half and then carve basic shapes such as a square, a triangle, a leaf etc. If it's easier, you can use a felt tip to draw the shape on and then cut around it. The potato shapes will need to be dried out over night. They will be too wet for printing straight away.



Oval Cut



Square Cut

## Printing the Positive & Negative Shape

For older children, give each child half a potato. Draw the outline of the shape on to the potato using a felt tip pen. This shouldn't ruin the pens if the potato is dry enough. Pupils can then cut around the shape to make the 'block' for printing. This can be done with small sharp knives or lino cutters. This must be done with caution and supervision is recommended.



The Potato for Printing



The Printed Sheet

The shape is then ready for printing! You can use clothing dyes on paper plates, or poster paint. You can wash the potato shape in between use if you need to change the colour.

## Printing the Positive & Negative Shape

For older children, give each child half a potato, ideally one that has been cut into a square shape, so that they are working on a square and not an irregular potato shaped oval. This also helps when you are making multiple prints, so that you can make repeated patterns by lining the edges of the square up. Draw the outline of the shape on to the potato using a felt tip pen.

This shouldn't ruin the pens if the potato is dry enough.



For this example a "C" has been cut out.

Pupils can then carve out the shape to make a heart shaped hole in the potato. Pupils can then cut around the shape to make the 'block' for printing. This can be done with small sharp knives or lino cutters. This must be done with caution and supervision is recommended. The shape is then ready for printing! You can use clothing dyes on paper plates, or poster paint. You can wash the potato shape in between use if you need to change the colour.

## Make Your Own Cardboard Blocks for Printing

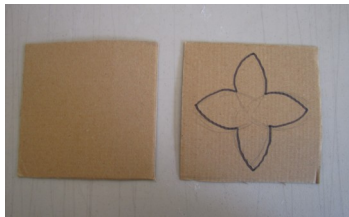
This can be done by providing pupils with pre-cut corrugated cardboard square approx 12 cm by 12 cm. Pupils must then create multiple identical shapes to layer up to create a block. It is best to start with simple shapes such as leaves or flowers.

Start by creating one shape out of cardboard and then use this as the template with which to create further shapes.

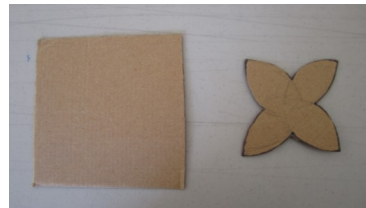
eg. Cut one flower, draw around it, cut another flower and then so on. The individual flower shapes can then be stuck together using glue sticks, and will form one block for printing.

### How to do it!

1



2



3



5



4



Paint the cardboard shape only, using a paint brush and acrylic or poster paint. You can then use your block to print with.

# Mono-Printing



Basic mono-printing by Nursery pupils

This simply means that you can only make one print and not multiple reproductions as with many other forms of printing. Mono-printing is perfect for school, as the results are instant and the technique can be used with children of all ages, right down to Foundation stage. The technique can be used to make pictures, or simply to make patterns and textures.



Year 6 pupils making mono-prints using plastic forks, cotton buds and pencils.

"How to do it"  
over the page!

To make a mono print you simply draw a design into a layer of paint. Paper is then placed over the design to make a print. **Here's how it works.**



## Materials

- **Paint**- acrylic paint or printing inks are best for printing, although effects can also be achieved by using poster paint. The only problem with poster paint is that it dries very quickly! A little PVA glue stirred into the paint will make it tackier and more suitable for making prints.
  - **Rollers**- small rollers should be provided for applying the paint. Using a paint brush or sponge will produce some interesting effects also, but rollers are best for an even coverage. The hard rubber rollers (called Brayers) are best for this if you have them.
  - **Plastic**- OHP acetate sheets are perfect for this, but plastic folders for ring binders can also be cut in half and used. Any stiff plastic will work but it must be flat and ideally one colour or clear so that designs can be seen clearly.
  - **Paper**- sugar paper or a thick paper, such as cartridge paper, are best for absorbing the paint. Try a variety of colours. Fabric can also be used for printing on. Calico or canvas is best, but old cotton sheets cut into squares or left whole for a large piece can also be used.
- Tools** for creating designs. These can be anything from cotton buds, plastic spoons and forks, end of pencils (though they will get very dirty) straws, wooden skewers etc.



*Paint trays and rollers for making mono-prints*

## What to do:

Prepare the area for printing. Cover the tables securely and provide several flat trays of colour. These can be the colour mixing trays that most schools have. If not, disposable foil cooking trays can also be used or any other clean plastic trays. Keep colours separate initially (although great effects can be created by marbling the paint as you pour it in)

Put the trays of paint into the middle of the table with 2 rollers per colour. Provide a working space for each pupil that will be printing. If using clear acetate sheets or plastic it is a good idea to put a scrap piece of white paper underneath the acetate sheets so that pupils can see the design that they are making.

Provide each child with a sheet of plastic with which to create their design. Pupils cover the plastic with a layer of paint using a roller. The whole of the plastic sheet needs to be covered with paint, right up to the corners.

Once the layer of paint has been added, pupils can create their designs. For young children it is good to start with simple patterns. For example, "Can you create stripes? Swirls? Circles?" If pupils want to change their design, the plastic sheet can be 'rolled' again, to create a fresh base for making the design.



*Pupils creating mono-print designs using cotton buds*

Finally when the design is ready, a piece of paper is placed over the top to make the print. Carefully add the paper and do not move it around as this will smudge the design. The paper can be gently 'rolled' with a clean roller, to assist with picking up the design. When done, carefully peel back the paper starting from one corner. The mono print will now be on the paper!

# Alternatives

1). Instead of scratching a design on to the plastic and then making a print, paint a layer of paint over the plastic and then immediately place the paper over the top of the plastic. Pupils can then draw over the paper using a pencil. When the paper is pulled back (carefully from one corner only) the drawing will be revealed as a print on the paper!

This is a bit like using carbon paper.

2). The plastic sheet - once the design has been 'scratched' on - can be picked up and printed on to fabric by carefully laying it down and gently rolling a clean roller over the back. Carefully peel back the plastic to reveal the design.

3). Allow the prints to dry and build up in several layers changing colours and designs each time.

*Top Tip!*

**Work quickly!  
Do not let the paint  
dry as it will not  
print!**



*Year 6 pupils create a canvas backdrop using mono printing.*

## Styrofoam Printing



*Year 2 pupils making Styrofoam leaves and bark textures as part of the A Sense of Place Teaching Pack.*

Styrofoam sheets can be purchased from school suppliers. They usually come in sheets that are approximately A4 size but they can be cut using large scissors or a craft knife into smaller pieces. Post card size or a bit smaller is fine for starting out. A Styrofoam print is made by drawing a shape or design on to the foam and then printing the foam design on to paper.

**How to do it:** Prepare the classroom for printing as before.  
**Paint-** acrylic paint or printing inks are best for printing, although effects can also be achieved by using poster paint. The only problem with poster paint is that it dries very quickly! A little PVA glue stirred into the paint will make it tackier and more suitable for making prints. Ensure that children are clear about the image that they are going to make a print of, for example, if they are printing pictures of leaves, make sure that they have made some observational drawings of leaves beforehand, so that they are not making the image for the first time.

Start the lesson with a demonstration of how to use the Styrofoam. Show what happens if you press too hard (it breaks/makes a hole) or not hard enough (the image will not print) Show what happens if you use too much paint, or not enough paint (the image will not show up)

Give each child a piece of Styrofoam and a pencil. If necessary pupils can draw their images softly with a felt tip first and then trace over the lines. Press down into the Styrofoam to create your design. Press hard enough to make a deep mark on the foam (just be careful not to go all the way through)

When the design has been made it is ready for printing.

Provide children with a piece of sugar paper or cartridge paper for individual work, or allow children to print on to one large sheet for group work.

The foam tile can now be coated with paint using either a roller (this is best for even coverage) or a brush- this works but provides a brush textured surface. Once a layer of paint has been added the tile can be turned upside down a press firmly on to the paper, taking care not to move it as this will smudge the print

# Styrofoam Printing



A Year 2 pupil with a "Leaf" Print



The "Leaf" tile after printing



*The Styrofoam tiles can be used for display once they have dried, along with the prints.*

## Styrofoam Printing



**The printed sheets  
can also be used to  
make collages!**