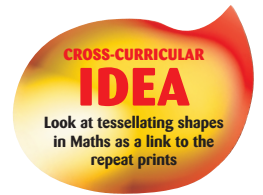


Block Printing on Fabric



This activity moves from exploration of existing print blocks to the children developing their own, unique blocks and using them to print on fabric.

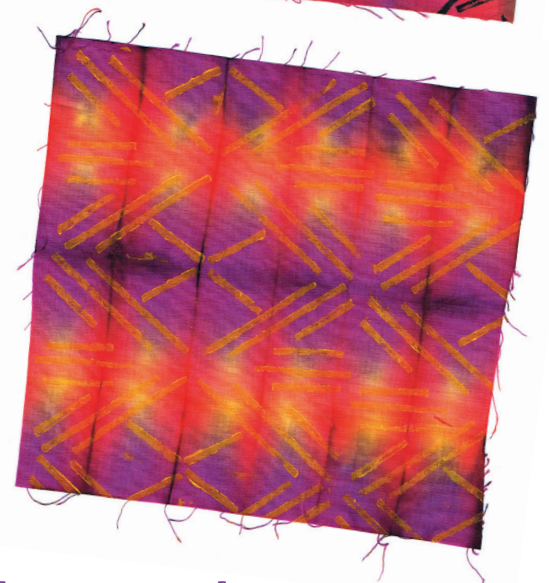
Materials

A variety of printing blocks (avoid foam blocks).
Wax crayons.
Paper.
Brusho®.
Thick card or pieces of wood.

Matchsticks.
PVA glue
Dip-dyed fabric (see Issue 5).
Ready-mixed paint.
Thin, flat washing-up sponge.

Method

- Allow children to handle and examine some print blocks and talk about their features e.g. designs, how they are made etc.
- Give the children some time to experiment with these print blocks by taking rubbings from them with wax crayons. Encourage them to use a variety of print blocks then wash over them with the Brusho®. These could be glued into sketchbooks later.
- Show the children the thick card/wood and matchsticks and explain that they are going to make their own print blocks by gluing matchsticks onto the thick card/wood.
- Encourage the children to explore different ways of arranging the matchsticks on the print block, trying different designs until they find one they are happy with.
- Cover the surface of the print block with PVA, glue the matchsticks in place and allow to dry.
- Prepare printing pads by putting some ready mixed paint onto a plate or mixing tray and laying the flat washing up sponge on top. Cut the sponge to fit if desired. You might have to press on the sponge a few times to bring the paint to the surface.
- When the print blocks are completely dry model how to press them onto the printing pad in order to ink up the block. The blocks may need to be pressed into the pad several times.
- The prints look best on dip-dyed fabric. See how to do this in Ideas & Techniques Issue 5. If this isn't appropriate then use a plain coloured fabric as it can look a little stark on white.
- Print onto the fabric and allow to dry.
- Review the finished prints, asking the children to comment positively on each others' work.



Taking it Further

Depending on the size of the fabric the pieces could be joined together to make a larger length of fabric which could be hung in the classroom. Alternatively, the individual pieces of printed fabric could be used in the centre of a cushion or wrapped round thick card and displayed on the classroom wall.

The value of this activity lies in the way it combines many different skills; taking rubbings, using pattern, making print blocks, printmaking, repeat or rotating patterns as well as working with textiles.