



Relief Prints

Learn a Traditional form of Printmaking.

Project Type: Creative, tactile

Group/Individual: Individual

Lesson Plan Audience: Maker Mentor

Time: 1 - 2 hrs

Hard Skills: Making a print, using a brayer and ink

Soft Skills: creative thinking, design

Ideal # of Participants: can be used with large groups

Age Group: 7+

Ideas for Taking it Further:

Finished prints can be used as part of another project: glue the prints to cardboard and make a mobile for the library, print on different sheets of colored paper and make a “quilt” of prints.

Introduce other ways of making prints like stamping.

Difficulties/Tips:

Understanding that the marks children make on the plate will turn out white instead of inked can be challenging. Encourage children to experiment before making a “final” plate.

Children can take some prints home and leave some at the library for display.

This project is best with plexiglass for an inking surface but wax paper duct taped on cardboard also works.



Materials needed:

Pencils	Plexiglass for inking
Paper	Relief Ink
Brushes	Brayers
Styrofoam Plates	

Set Up

Set-up two stations

- 1) Drawing station with pencils, paper, and styrofoam plates
- 2) Ink Station: brayers, plexi glass, ink, and paper

As makers arrive set them up with a styrofoam plate, pencil, and a piece of paper.

Drawing:

Drawing into the plates can be confusing to the kids in terms of thinking of positive and negative marks, allow them to experiment and mess around on the first one and encourage them to think of it as a mock-up for a final one.

- 1) Stack several plates on top of each other to provide a stiffer surface to work on, lay them upside down and work on the flat bottom of the plate.
- 2) Draw directly into the foam, making indentation in the styrofoam. Everywhere that you draw will show up as white in the final print. The areas not drawn into will be the color of the ink. Crossing lines over each other (cross hatching) can make an entire area white.
- 3) In the event that someone's hand slips and makes a mark on the plate they did not intend to, turn the plate 45 degrees and show that it could be a different shape in the overall image.

Printing the plate:

- 1) Squeeze the ink out of the tube like a toothpaste commercial, an even thick line, about the width of the rubber roller on the brayer.
- 2) Using a brayer: roll the ink back and forth, adjusting the brayer so that the entire surface of the brayer is evenly covered, make a square on the surface of the plexi, by rolling the ink up and down and then front left to right.
- 3) lay the plate flat on the table and roll the surface of the plate until it is completely covered in ink, but with the impressed lines of the styrofoam still clean and white.
- 4) place a sheet of paper on the table and lay the plate ink-side down on the paper
- 5) Using even light pressure rub the plate and paper against the table
- 6) Flip the plate over and remove the paper from the plate.
- 7) Now you have a print! Print the plate several times until the ink is used up. Now, make prints in new colors of ink.

