



ART PROJECTS AT HOME

# Potato Printmaking: Intermediate

## Description:

In this project, students will use a potato and acrylic paint to create a unique relief print. Relief print originated in East Asia, and was used to create designs for dyed textiles, before being adopted by the west to express a narrative in book printing. Students can look to the masterful designs of Gujarat textiles to inspire their own patterned relief print.

## Master Artists /

### Art Historical References:

- Katsushika Hokusai, *Under the Wave Off Kanagawa*
- Traditional Printed Textiles from the Gujarat Region of India

**Discipline:** Printmaking

**Age Levels:** 7 - 9 years old

## Needed Materials:

- Potato
- Carving tools: paperclip, sharp pencil
- Rag or paper towel for drying and clean up
- Acrylic paint
- Brush
- Paper or fabric for printing

## Attributions:

Virtual Learning Project Developer: Augustine Smith

Curriculum Developer: Tamah Minnis

## Essential Terms:

- Relief print: An image created when ink is applied to the surface of a carved object which is then applied to paper or fabric.
- Pattern: A repeated decorative design.
- Stencil: A thin sheet of cardboard, plastic, or metal with a pattern or letters cut out of it, used to produce the cut design on the surface below by the application of ink or paint through the holes.

## Primary Goals and Related National Standards:

- Students will be able to create a carved printing block from a potato.
- Students will be able to create a unique printed artwork.
- Students will create a work that incorporates pattern.



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## Procedure:

1. Sketch some ideas for your printed design. Remember the image you carve will be reflected, or mirrored, when you go to print it. Consider creating a pattern using an ABA pattern. For example, a flower (A), a star (B), and then another flower (A).
2. Once you have decided what you want your design to be, cut the potato in half and use one of the halves to create an outline for a stencil.
3. Fill in your stencil with the design you want to see on your potato and cut it out.
4. Lay your stencil onto the potato and apply your design to the potato by carving an indented line, either with a sharp pencil or paper clip around the stencil.
5. Carve around your design using your desired carving tool. A knife works well for older artists, but the curved end of a paper clip is great for artists not quite old enough for sharp objects. Remember, anything that is carved away will become negative space, or the white of the page, and anything left behind will become your printed image.
6. Pat the surface of the potato dry.
7. Use a brush to apply a generous coat of acrylic paint to your design.
8. Align your potato printing block with your paper and apply pressure for 3 seconds.
9. Remove your potato to reveal your printed image. Create multiple potato printing blocks to create a patterned printed work!

## Bonus Tips:

- Remember the image you carve will be reflected, or mirrored, when you go to print it.