

## **Printing - Repeats**

*The children cut animal figures from Styrofoam and print them repeatedly on collages made with tissue paper. For ages 9 to 12. Plan 3 sessions.*

### **KEY IDEAS**

- Relief printing
- Making repeated prints from a single plate
- Understanding and using printing terms
- Making a collage for the background

### **LANGUAGE**

relief printing, brayer, printing plate, collage, overlap

### **YOU WILL NEED**

- White drawing paper approximately 12 by 18 inches (one per child)
- Colored tissue paper
- White glue thinned with water
- Small containers for glue (one for every two children)
- Inexpensive ½- to 1-inch-sized brushes for gluing
- Newspaper to cover tables
- Styrofoam trays from grocery stores or Scratch-foam from art supply stores cut into approximately 3½- x 6-inch pieces (one for each child plus a few extra)
- Pencils with blunt points
- Sketching paper
- Scissors
- Black permanent-ink markers
- Soft rubber brayers
- Sheets of glass or Plexiglas to be used as ink trays
- Water-based printing inks
- Magazines from newspapers

*Note: If using recycled trays, wash them carefully. Some grocery stores will donate unused trays or sell them for a nominal fee.*

### **THE PROJECT**

#### **First Session**

##### **Preparation**

- Add small amounts of water to the glue until it can be spread easily with a brush. Put the glue into containers, planning one for every two children.
- Set out the drawing paper, tissue paper, scissors, thinned glue, and brushes.
- Cover the work area with newspapers.

##### **How to Begin**

- In the next several sessions, the children will each select an animal and create its

environment by making a *collage*, an artwork made by arranging and gluing materials to a single flat surface. They will then cut their animal figures from Styrofoam and print them at least three times in the prepared environments. In this session, they will be using colored tissue paper to make the collages.

- Explain that since the animals will be cut from styrofoam and printed several times, the children will need to choose sturdy animals, avoiding delicate appendages. The backgrounds for the prints should reflect the environments of the chosen animals, such as dolphins in the ocean, tigers in the jungle, or pets in the yard.
- Demonstrate how to make a collage for the background, cutting the tissue paper into shapes that are appropriate to the chosen environment, such as long thin shapes to suggest calm, serene water or choppy shapes to indicate grass. Apply the tissue paper to the drawing paper by brushing the glue directly onto a small area of the drawing paper; laying a cut piece of the tissue paper on top of the wet area; and gently applying glue over the top of the tissue paper, making sure the entire piece, including the edges, is moistened. Be careful to not use so much glue that it puddles on the paper. Repeat this process each time a piece of tissue paper is added.
- Encourage the children to *overlap* the pieces of tissue paper, laying one piece of tissue paper over the edge of another piece.
- Have the children decide which animals they want to use and then prepare their environments with tissue paper.

*Note: The dried collages will ripple and should be flattened under some weight to make printing on them easier.*

## **Second Session**

### **Preparation**

- Cut the Styrofoam trays or scratch-foam into approximately 3½- x 6-inch pieces, planning one per child plus a few extra.
- Set out the Styrofoam or scratch-foam pieces, scissors, black markers, sketching paper, and blunt-pointed pencils.

### **How to Begin**

- In this session, the children will be cutting their animal figures from Styrofoam to make *printing plates* which will be used to transfer the images to the paper.
- Explain that it is important to plan the drawings of the animals on the sketching paper because every mark made on the Styrofoam will show in the print. To transfer the drawings, lay them on the Styrofoam and trace them lightly with pencils. Go over the resulting indentations with black markers to make it easier to follow the cutting lines.
- Show the children how to cut the Styrofoam. Explain that turning the scissors around edges is difficult and could cause the Styrofoam to break. It is easier to start most cuts from the outside edge of the Styrofoam, cutting inward towards the figure.
- After the figures are cut out, textures and details can be added with a blunt-pointed pencil, pressing firmly, but not so hard that the lines break through the plate. Explain that when drawing on Styrofoam it is easier to pull lines towards you rather than pushing away.

- Have the children plan their animals, cut them from the Styrofoam, and add details.

### **Third Session**

#### **Preparation**

- Prepare one or more printing stations. Each station should be covered with newspaper and include a magazine, an ink tray, a brayer, and printing ink.
- Set out the prepared printing plates and flattened collages.

#### **How to Begin**

- In this session, the children will print their animals three or more times on their tissue paper collages.
- Demonstrate the printing process by placing about an inch of printing ink onto the ink tray. With the *brayer*, a small roller used to transfer ink to a printing plate, roll the ink in several directions. Be sure the children understand that the intention is to have the ink evenly distributed on the brayer rather than the ink tray. Place the printing plate on a magazine with the drawing facing up and roll the inked brayer across it. Refill the brayer by rolling across the ink tray again. Then roll the brayer over the printing plate in another direction. When finished, turn the magazine page so that the next person will have a clean work surface.
- Explain that the areas pushed in by the pencil will not get ink on them. When the print is made, the pushed-in lines will remain the color of the background. This process is referred to as *relief printing*.
- Position the printing plate with the inked side facing down on the tissue paper collage and press firmly over the entire surface of the plate, especially the edges. Carefully lift the plate. Repeat this process, re-inking the plate each time until enough prints have been made on the collage.
- Have the children fill their collages with three or more prints.

### **NOTES**

- In order to print successfully on the collage, all the edges of the tissue paper need to be carefully glued down. Apply glue to cover only the immediate area for each individual piece of tissue paper. If glue is applied to the whole paper at one time, it dries too quickly.
- Remind the children to handle the Styrofoam carefully since it is breakable and any marks made on it will show in the printing. Be sure they understand to cut from the outside edge of the Styrofoam into the drawn figure instead of trying to make turns with the scissors which will cause the styrofoam to break. Scratch-foam is easier to cut than Styrofoam, but both print well.
- You, rather than the children, should put the ink on the ink tray since using too much will clog the lines on the printing plates. The proper amount of ink will sound tacky when rolling the brayer across it. If too much ink has been applied, the sound will be smooth or slimy.

### **LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR WORK**

- Are the relief prints sharp and crisp?
- Do the animals and their environments fill the papers?
- Is the tissue paper in the collages well attached, including the edges?

#### **What the children might say...**

- *The edges of my tissue paper won't stay down.*
- *Oh no! There's a puddle of glue on my paper.*
- *How can I make the water and the sky different since they are both blue?*
- *My fingers are full of printing ink. I'm afraid I will get it on my collage.*
- *How many animal prints should I make on my collage?*

#### **What you might say...**

- *You need to brush the glue over the top of each piece of tissue paper, including all the edges.*
- *Only use enough glue to hold the tissue paper flat on your paper. If your glue puddles, you can brush it over to another section of your paper, and use it to apply the next piece of tissue paper.*
- *To make the water stand out from the sky, you might add another color of tissue paper in each area, such as green mixed with the blue for the water and white mixed with the blue for the sky. Another way might be to vary the shapes in each area.*
- *If you need to wash your hands, be sure to dry them very well before continuing to work. Water will make the printing ink smear.*
- *Plan to make at least three prints on your collage. You can decide how many more prints will best fill your paper.*