

Key Stage 4/5: Japanese printmaking

The final page of these notes can be copied and given to students who you think may need additional support during the workshop or for reinforcement.

Before your visit: preparing for your visit

- Key themes for the workshop are the artistic and cultural traditions of Japan, how they differ from those in the West and the technique of printmaking in Japan.
- Key vocabulary includes: motif, wood-block, cherry-wood, relief, block-cutter, Japonisme, Hiroshige, Utamaro, Hokusai, Kabuki, tradition, carve, ink.
- Use the British Museum website's *Explore* function to search prints in the Museum's Japanese collections. Students should examine the subject matter, the use of colour, form and style and identify similarities and differences between Japanese art and the contemporary art of the West. They can collect any motifs or patterns they may include in their final print created at the Museum.

During your visit

- Students will create their own sketches based on original works in the Japanese Rooms. Whilst sketching they will be encouraged to observe colour, form, shade, technique and style as well as subject matter and traditional Japanese motifs.
- Drawing on these sketches for inspiration, and incorporating any other pre-visit ideas, students will then finalise their chosen design and transfer it using carbon paper on to their Japanese wood-block.
- The design is then cut from the block using authentic Japanese tools and traditional techniques. Once the finished design has been carved, students will print their design in black and white using Japanese ink and paper.
- The workshop closes as students present their finished work to the group and each student will take away their carved wood-block and their own Japanese prints.
- Further exploration of the prints and objects in the Japanese Galleries (Rooms 92-94) will develop ideas and techniques introduced workshop.

Japanese Printmaking continued...

Important note: health and safety: This workshop introduces students to new materials and cutting tools and due care must be taken at all times. Japanese ink is water-based and will not permanently stain clothes, although we recommend that students bring aprons or protective clothing in case of any spillage. Japanese cutting tools are extremely sharp and proper supervision will be provided during the workshop. Students should take due care whilst using sharp equipment.

After your visit: follow-up activities

- **Art and Design:** use your Japanese wood-block to print on to different papers or textiles. Any water-based inks can be used, although dark colours will be more effective.
- **Art and Design:** to create your own wood-block back at school, plywood may be used. Experiment with different cutting tools. Knives, needles or thick nails will all create different effects.
- **Art and Design/History of Art:** with reference to the work of European artists such as Albrecht Durer, compare the techniques of Japanese printmaking with methods used in the West such as etching, copper-plate engraving and drypoint.
- **Art and Design/History of Art:** students should consider why the Impressionists (Monet, Degas) and Post-Impressionists (Van Gogh, Gauguin) were so impressed by Japanese prints often collecting, and sometimes drawing directly from, Japanese examples.

Curriculum links

GCSE Art and Design: Pupils must demonstrate their ability to develop and explore ideas using media, processes and resources, reviewing, modifying and refining work as it progresses.

AS/A Level Art and Design

Pupils should develop knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design in contemporary society and in other times and cultures.

AS/A Level History of Art

Pupils should be acquainted with the evolution of wood-block techniques, and of the range and variety of subject-matter found in Japanese prints. The assimilation of Japanese prints into Western art of the late nineteenth century by the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists.

Key vocabulary for this workshop:

Tools and technique:

- wood-block
- cherry-wood
- block-cutter
- relief
- carve
- ink

Styles:

- motif
- decoration
- tradition
- influence
- Japonisme – influence of arts from Japan on those of the West
- Kabuki – traditional form of Japanese theatre

Famous Artists

- Utamaro (1753 – 1806)
- Hokusai (1760 – 1849)
- Hiroshige (1797 – 1858)