

Glass Mosaic Panels or Tiles (art + history)

This project provides simple instruction for the direct method of mosaic design and execution. Students design and construct a finished project that involves breaking up a two-dimensional design and adjusting it into a mosaic relief. The combination of found objects, mosaic tiles and grout make a mosaic colorful and interesting. The textured high and low surface of this type of relief is not functional but rather a decorative art form.

The Greek and Roman civilizations are a study of gigantic mosaics both functional and decorative. Mosaics are made from an unending number of materials.

Variations and hints on mosaics are listed at the end of this lesson plan.

Grade Levels 5-12

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. View examples of mosaics in history and contemporary craft. Recommended resources:
[The Mosaic Artist's Handbook from Barron's](#) (69950-1001)
[Mosaic Ideas and Projects](#) (71682-1001)
[Encyclopedia of Mosaic Techniques](#) (71681-1001)

Process

1. Using a piece of paper the size of the wood base, design a loose, simple design that can be flexible as the variety of tiles and objects are applied. Be certain to leave a 1/2" border around the outside of the paper. Choose tiles and other items to be used in the design. Leave approximately 1/8" between objects for application of grout later. Spacing between tiles can be uneven. This will create a negative space. Use the tile cutters to trim the tiles for interesting shapes.

NOTE: When cutting tiles, wear [Blick Safety Goggles](#) (62952-1002) to protect eyes and cotton gloves to protect hands. Hold cutters low at your waist and cover the cutting area with a cupped hand. Squeeze the cutter with your other hand.



Materials

[Wood Blocks 6" x 8"](#) (42902-1001), 12 blocks per package, need one block per student

[Wheeled Glass Tile Nipper](#) (60997-1001) share two

[Mosaic Tile Adhesive](#) 8-oz bottle (62948-1005) share four across classroom

[Blick Mosaic Studio® Tile Grout](#) 2-lb (61132-), assorted colors, share four containers across classroom

Mosaic Tiles, choose from:

[Blick Mosaic Studio® Metallic Tiles, 3/4"](#) (61151-1000), 24 tiles per bag

[Blick Mosaic Studio® Stained Glass Tiles, 3/4"](#) (60998-1001), 8-oz bag contains approximately 150 tiles

[Blick Mosaic Studio® Ceramic Deco Tiles](#) (61139-1002), 8-oz package of approximately 15 assorted shapes

[Blick Mosaic Studio® Glass Squiggles](#) (61429-0125) 1.25-lb package of assorted colors and shapes

[Glass Globes 3/8"](#) (34924-1106) 1-lb package of assorted colors

Process, continued

2. Draw a line 1/2" inside the edge on all for sides of the wood block. Transfer the design to the wood base within the border. Apply adhesive to the back of each tile. Push the tile firmly onto the wood block in the desired position.
3. Place the panel on a flat surface weighted with a book or brick to prevent warping. Allow glue to dry completely (2-3 hours).
4. Select a grout color that complements the design. Light colored grout with dark tiles and dark grout with light tiles will give the best contrast.
5. Mix grout as you will need it. Grout cannot be stored once wet. For two 6" x 8" panels, use two cups dry group. Add one cup of water (1/2 cup at a time). Mix until the grout is the consistency of brownie batter. Allow to stand 2-3 minutes.
6. Apply grout by dropping large spoonfuls on top of the mosaic. Use a damp sponge to spread and force the grout into the spaces between the tiles. Cover the entire surface. Slant the grout around the edges from design to panel edge.
7. Fill a bowl half-full of water. Carefully wipe off excess grout with a wet sponge. Squeeze excess grout into bowl. Clean sponge with water and repeat the process until all excess grout is removed. Make sure not to clean to the point where grout is removed from between the tiles. A film will form on top of the tiles but can be cleaned once the grout is dry.

Options

- Adhesive and grout can be used directly on a wall or column
- For younger students, limit size of project and use only glass tiles.
- When grout is dry, rub common salad or cooking oil onto the panel. It will bring out the color in the grout and make the glass shine. Repeat and wipe off with a paper towel until the grout has a rich color.
- Put an old dinnerplate in a heavy-duty freezer bag, zip closed. Gently break with hammer. Use cotton gloves to carefully handle pieces and add to your mosaic.

Options, continued

- Add odd shaped pieces of glass, ceramics or pieces of old jewelry.
- Purchase small ceramic tiles at a home center. Paint the tiles, following instructions in the **Ceramic Tile Paintings** lesson plan. Work painted tiles into your mosaic.

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National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

- **5-8** Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas
- **9-12** Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks

Content Standard #4 —Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

- **5-8** Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art
- **9-12** Students analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making

Content Standard #6 — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

- **5-8** Students describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts
- **9-12** Students compare characteristics of visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues, or themes in the humanities or sciences