



Itajime Decorative Paper

(art + social studies; art + science)

Itajime Shibori is a technique for folding, clamping and dyeing paper or fabric resulting in beautiful designs - very similar to tie-dye. The folds and clamps keep the dye or ink from penetrating fully in certain areas making patterns and giving a dimensional appearance on a flat surface. This project is a great way to teach students the scientific concept of diffusion and color mixing.

Grade Levels 3-12

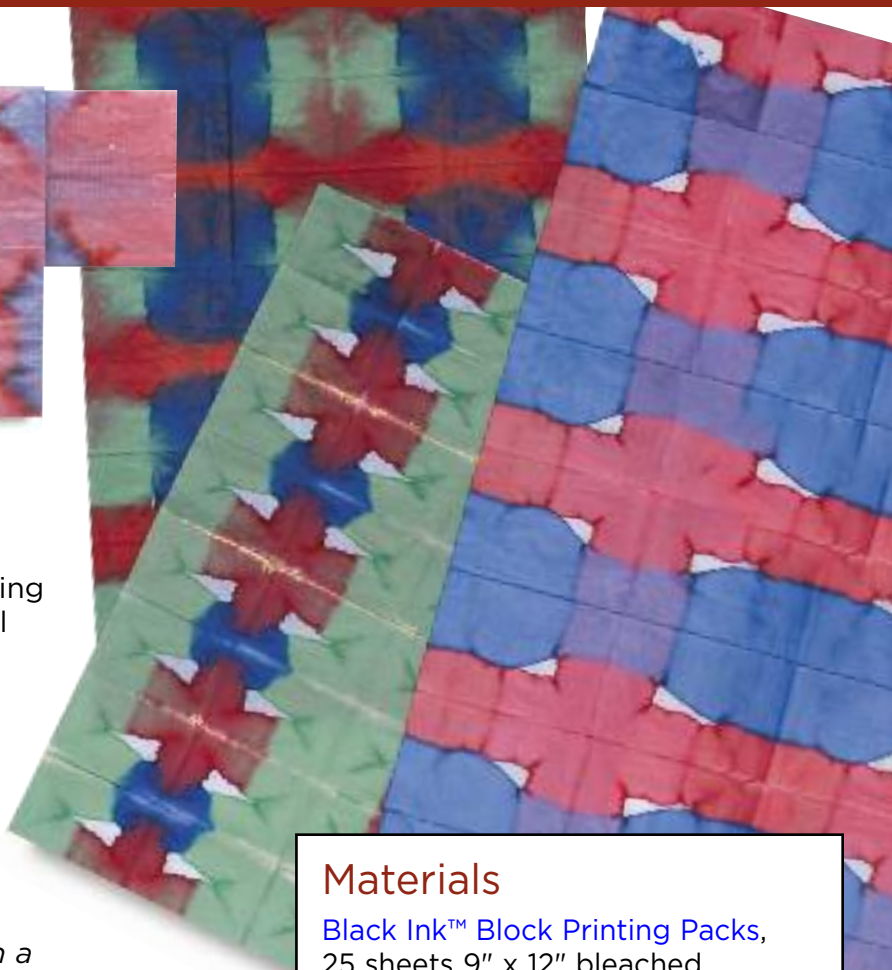
Note: instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Fill the bowls 1/3 full of Blick Liquid Watercolors. Bowls should be at least 4" dia. and 2" deep for students to fit hands and folded paper and clips into. Share three bowls of color between six students.

Process

1. Each student begins with one sheet of paper, one pair of wooden shapes and two binder clips. Different shapes (squares, ovals, triangles, etc.) will define different patterns.
2. Begin by folding the 12" side of the paper accordion-style every 1". When the sheet is folded completely, fold the 9" side in half and then fold the half sheet in half again. Students can also experiment and fold in different formats such as diagonally or in a more complex manner to create different effects.
3. Position the wooden shapes on the front and back of the folded paper so that the paper is held between the pair of wood shapes. It is important to get them as closely matched in position as possible for best results. "Clamp" the shapes in position with the binder clips. You may also clamp the paper



Materials

[Black Ink™ Block Printing Packs](#), 25 sheets 9" x 12" bleached Mulberry (10449-6603); need one sheet per student

[Blick® Liquid Watercolors](#), 8-oz bottles, primary colors:
Yellow (00369-4005)
Blue (00369-5005)
Magenta (00369-3045)

Share one of each color across class

[Acco® Binder Clips](#), Medium, 1-1/4", box of 12 (57330-4114); need two clips per student

[Creativity Street® Wood Shapes](#), Pack of 1,000 (60453-1000); share across class

Bowls, three per paint color, at least 4" dia. and 2" deep

Paper towels

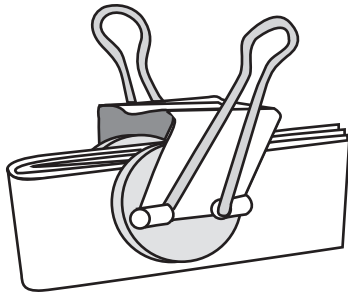
Optional Materials

[Foam Brushes](#), 1" (05114-1001)

Process, continued

with just the clips for a different result.

Keep in mind the shapes and clips will not prevent the watercolor from coloring the paper, but will alter the flow and shades within the patterned lines.



4. For best results use primary colors of the Blick Liquid Watercolors in the standard liquid watercolor form rather than the Glitter or Metallic colors; these will not absorb into the paper the same way. The paint can be used straight from the bottle for bright, vivid colors or slightly diluted for a softer look. The primary colors will mix to make secondary colors.
5. Holding the clip ends, dip each corner of the folded paper in to the liquid paint. A foam brush can be used to apply paint to edges, or to add a second color to the corners, gently blot the excess on the paper towels. Open the sheet while it is still damp, if the paper dries completely before unfolding, it may stick to itself and tear.
6. Lay the paper flat and allow it to dry completely. Once the paper is dry it may be ironed between two pieces of fabric if a less textured sheet is desired, however some of the folds will remain.
7. Students may wish to use fewer fold and two different pairs of shapes and four binder clips or larger sheets of paper with more complex folds for more elaborate patterns.

Options

- When the paper is dry use as a background for bamboo brush calligraphy, to cover a book or journal, make gift wrap or for Origami projects. Recommended resources:

[Oriental Papercrafts: 25 Beautiful Eastern-Inspired Projects](#), book (71523-1001)

[Origami Activities for Children](#), book (69935-1003)

[The Simple Art of Chinese Calligraphy](#), book (71109-1001)

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

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

K-4 Students know the differences between materials, 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

K-4 Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places

5-8 Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures

9-12 Students differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art

