

## Ball Point Engravings

Draw, press, rub, repeat. How easy is that?

An engraving is a design that is worked into a surface using tools that create recessed, cut, or carved lines. Engravers use gravers (tools) to cut designs into metals, glass, stone, and many other surfaces. The first engravings were created by stone-age artists on eggshells, bones, and rocks.

In printmaking, "engraving" refers to the printed image that is created by a wood, metal, or plastic plate that has been carved to hold ink lines and loosely refers to many different types of techniques.

The engraving method described in this lesson plan is very low-tech, but safe and open to all sorts of creative possibilities.

Hollywood has often pictured a detective discovering a clue by rubbing a pencil over a note pad and revealing the message that was pressed into the paper by someone writing on the sheet before it. In the same manner, a design can be engraved onto a board by drawing on paper positioned over it, using heavy pressure. The engraving is then revealed by rubbing graphite or colorful art sticks over it. The color applies to the flat surface of the board, but not to the recessed lines. Multiple layers of engraving and color can be built up in one image.

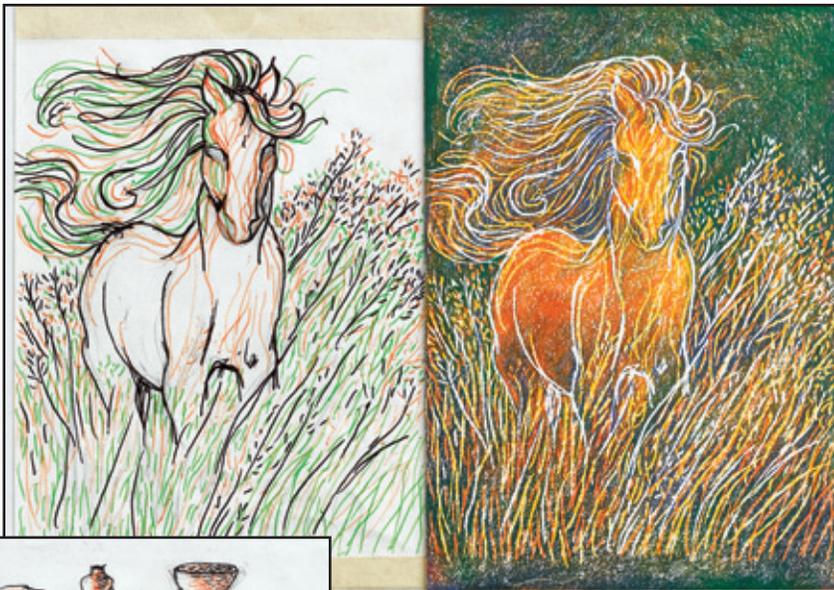
**GRADES 5-12** Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

### Preparation

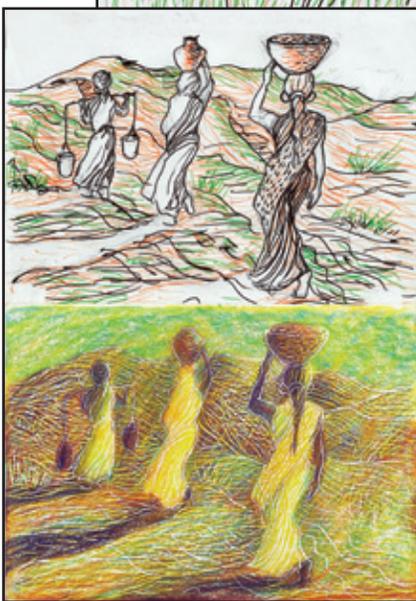
1. Cut palette paper to 5" x 7" pieces. Paper other than palette paper may be used, but it must be lightweight and strong enough to withstand heavy pressure from a ballpoint pen.

### Process

1. Create a line drawing lightly in pencil on the matte side of the palette paper. Consider that the lines may be multiple colors and that they may overlap. Some lines may create shading and texture — such as cross-hatched lines or stippling.
2. Tape palette paper across the top of the board hinge-style so that the paper may be lifted up and placed back down in the same position. Tape the bottom down with a small piece of masking tape that can be easily lifted and reapplied. Position with drawing side up and the coated side facing the board.
3. Use a ballpoint pen with a strong barrel and a rounded nib. Some ballpoint pens have a "pointier" fine line nib that will cut through paper, so opt for



Left: Ball point drawing  
Right: Ball point engraving



Top: Ball point drawing  
Bottom: Ball point engraving  
Inset: detail



### Materials (required)

Crescent No. 99 University Grade Cold Press Illustration Board, 14 ply 5" x 7", package of 3 (13406-1020); need one board per student

Blick Studio Disposable Palette Pads, 50 sheets, 12" x 16" (03063-2006); share one across class

Masking Tape, 1" x 60 yd roll (24126-1024); share one across class

Bic Velocity Bold Ball Pen, set of 8 colors (22518-1008); share three across class

Crayola Color Sticks, assorted colors (22083-) share a minimum of three colors per student

### Optional Materials

Super Black Presentation and Mounting Board, 14-ply, 15" x 20" (13447-2051)

Blick Matte Fixative, 12 oz (21707-1105)

Prismacolor Art Stix, set of 24 (20008-0249)



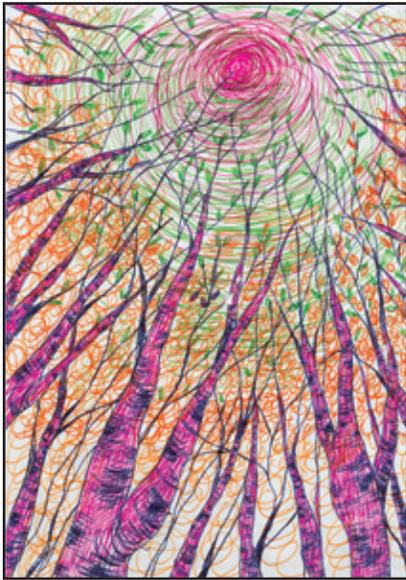
## Process, continued

pens with a traditional size point of approximately 1.5 mm. It is also helpful to have multiple colors. Engrave lines by tracing the sketch using firm pressure. The first lines drawn will remain white. Lines that will be other colors will be drawn in successive steps.

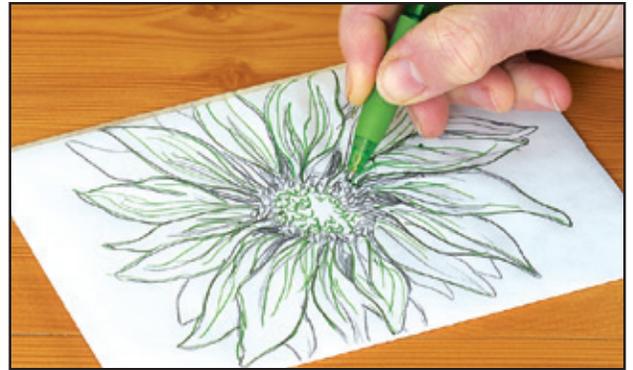
4. Lift the masking tape on just the bottom of the palette paper (keeping it hinged at the top) and move it out of the way, behind the board. Choose a color stick with a light tonal value such as yellow and rub the long, flat side over the surface, revealing the engraved lines.
- Note:** it is important to use a dustless medium. Chalk pastels will migrate color into the engraving and ruin the effect.
5. Place the palette paper back over the board and tape it back in place. Repeat step 3. Lines that are created during this step will remain the color that was applied in step 4. Using a different color ballpoint pen is recommended, to be able to tell which lines have already been traced.
6. Lift the palette paper away from the board again and use a color stick of a darker tonal value than the color that was applied in step 4. The white lines will remain and the light color lines will now be visible.
7. Continue with the pattern of pressing lines through the palette paper and rubbing color over them on the board until all lines are drawn and color is built up in layers on the board. Remove the masking tape and palette paper and discard.

## Options

1. Spray a matte fixative lightly over the artwork to keep color from migrating into the engraved lines.
2. Use a black illustration board, see example below.



**Step 1:** Create a line drawing on palette paper and tape it to an illustration board.



**Step 2:** Using a ballpoint pen, trace lines with firm enough pressure to engrave the board beneath.



**Step 3:** Stroke a light-value color stick over the board to reveal the engraved lines.



**Step 4:** Repeat the process of drawing lines and rubbing color over the engraving until all lines are drawn and color is built up in layers.

## National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

### **Creating**

#### **Anchor Standard 1:**

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

#### **Anchor Standard 2:**

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

#### **Anchor Standard 3:**

Refine and complete artistic work.

### **Presenting**

#### **Anchor Standard 5:**

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

### **Responding**

#### **Anchor Standard 7:**

Perceive and analyze artistic work.

#### **Anchor Standard 9:**

Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.