

EZ-Grout Mosaics

Mimic the look of mosaic tiles, without the mess of grout.

art + social studies

EZ-Grout Mosaics

All ages can mimic mosaic artisans throughout history with these easy tile-making and “grouting” techniques. Handmade tiles are formed from air-dry clay, glued to a firm backing, then “grouted” with Blickrylic paint giving a colorful, recessed dimensional look to the artwork. The resulting decorative piece of 2D art can be simple enough for younger students and those with special needs or may be more intricately designed by advanced students. The uneven thickness and edges of the final piece add distinctive charm to this project.

GRADES K-12

Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Discuss and view examples of mosaic art from history and contemporary artists.
2. Prepare sketches of tile designs to be cut from clay. For best results, keep the subject simple without too many pieces or “tiles”.
3. Cut foamboard into pieces approximately 10" x 15". Need one piece per student.

Process

1. Working on the canvas sheet, flatten clay slab with a rolling pin to about 1/4" thickness. The edges may be thinner and more random.
2. Lightly draw a design onto the clay using a sharp pencil. Students can rub out mistakes with fingers. Once design is drawn on the clay, trace the lines with a fettling knife, using enough pressure to cut through the clay all the way to the canvas sheet.
3. Allow clay tiles to fully dry and “cure” for several days so they will be less likely to break. As a precaution against curling or warping, cover tiles with a piece of wax paper then weight with a book until dry.
4. When the tiles are fully dry, gently move them from the canvas to a clean piece of inexpensive paper or wax paper. Keep them in order so they can easily be reassembled. Remove any burrs or clay nubs from tile edges with a piece of finegrit sandpaper. Wipe with a dry tissue to remove dust from the clay.
5. Paint the tiles with Blickrylic colors. The color could be extended from one tile to another like a painting or each piece could be individually painted. Allow to dry.
6. Arrange the tile design onto the foamboard background. Set each piece approximately 1/4" apart then glue in place one at a time.



Materials

[Blick Essentials Black Glue](#), 16oz (23978-2026); share one bottle between 6 students

[Das Modeling Clay](#), (30538-1042); share one package between 6 students

[Non-Stick Rolling Pins, 12"](#) (30345-0000); share two share across class

[Kemper Fettling Knives](#), (30349-1010); share four across class

[Dynasty Ruby Synthetic Brush Canister](#), asst. of 72 (05198-0729); share one set across class

[Blickrylic Student Acrylics](#), asst.colors, (00711-); share 4-8 pints across class

[Elmer's Blackcore Foam Board](#), 18" x 24" x 3/16", (13228-2029); share five sheets across class

Optional Materials

[Plastic Squeeze Bottles](#), 4-oz (04916-1004)

[3M Production Sandpaper](#), fine grit (34916-1303)



Process, continued

- Carefully squeeze the Blick Black Glue onto the foamboard between the tiles. Note: the thick glue will look like it fills the space but will shrink as it dries, giving a recessed look. If a full grouted space is desired, apply a second layer of glue.

Options

- Use Blickrylic Student Acrylic Paints (00711-) instead of Blick Black Glue as grout.



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.

Responding

Anchor Standard 8: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.



Step 1: Draw a design on a clay slab and cut it out with a fettling knife.



Step 2: Paint and arrange on a foamboard support approximately 1/4" of an inch apart.



Step 3: Fill the spaces with Blick Black Glue.