

Simple Printmaking Activities:

These activities are designed to help students learn the basics of the four main types of printmaking: relief, intaglio, stencil, and planography.

Relief Printmaking:

Relief means “from the raised surface.” In relief printmaking, “ink” is placed on the raised surface of the object or block to be printed. The object is then pressed onto a piece of paper, transferring the image to the paper. The printed image will be reversed left to right.

Activity #1. For children in grades 2&3.

Begin having the children find as many **low relief** objects with textures as possible. A walk in and around the school may produce enough raw materials to complete the project. Avoid sharp things like broken glass or germ carriers like cigarette butts and empty soda cans.

Give each child a piece of heavy paperboard like milk-carton paper, tag board, railroad board or card stock. Have the children create a picture of something (landscape, people, transportation, etc.) by gluing the **low relief** objects onto the card stock. Have them fill up the whole card stock backing. Basically, you are creating a collage to be printed, called a **Collagraph**. This will form the **printing block**. When the glue is dry, seal the block with acrylic medium or polyurethane varnish (a thin coat works best). If you are going to spray them you may want to wait until the children are gone.

Give each child a piece of white sulfate drawing paper, manila paper, or other absorbent **paper**. Let the children paint the surface of the block or roll water-based relief **ink** over it. While the ink or paint is still wet have the children place a piece of the printing paper over the **inked block**. Rub the back of the printing paper with a wooden spoon or a **baren** to **transfer** the image to the **paper**. Repeat the inking and printing process 4 or 5 more times to create a short **edition**.

Teachers should try out the activity and create some prints of their own before having the kids do it. They may also need to demonstrate inking and printing the blocks.

When the prints are finished set them aside to dry. When dry, have the children sign the prints at the “bottom” of the print and display them for all to see. These are **signed original prints**.

SAVE the block for use in intaglio printmaking.

This project results in an **edition**, where more than one copy is made.
Note: Bold face terms are printmaking vocabulary.