
Mehndi Handprints



Grade: 1st

Medium: Drawing

Learning Objective: Students create a decorative design on their handprint using pattern, repetition, and variation of lines following the tradition of Mehndi.

Author: Angie Warren

Elements of Art/Principles of Design

Line: an element of visual arts; the flat path of a dot through space used by artists to control the viewer's eye movement; a long narrow mark or stroke made on or in a surface; a thin mark made by a pencil, pen, or brush. The repetition of lines (and/or shapes) is used to create texture, pattern, and gradations of value

Shape: an element of visual arts; a two-dimensional (flat) area enclosed by a line.

- **Geometric:** shapes that are based on mathematical principles, such as a square/cube, circle/sphere, triangle/cone, or pyramid.

- **Organic:** shapes that are irregular, often curving or rounded, and more informal than geometric shapes.

Pattern: a principle of design; the repetition of the elements of visual arts in an organized way.

Radial Balance/Symmetry: a type of balance that is equally symmetrical from the center point throughout.

Repetition: the repeated use of particular elements of visual arts to create a pattern, movement, rhythm, or unity

Variation: the use of the elements of visual arts to create differences in an artwork for visual interest.

Materials & Supplies

- Pencil
- Dark brown fine point permanent markers
- 12 x 18" 110# heavyweight paper
- Scissors
- Pattern example reference sheet

Context (History and/or Artists)

Mehndi is derived from the Sanskrit word *mendhikā*. It is an ancient Indian Vedic tradition intended to be a symbolic representation of the outer and the inner sun and centered on the idea of "awakening the inner light" of consciousness.

Mehndi designs are traditionally created on skin using henna, a reddish-brown coloring made from a flowering plant that grows in tropical and subtropical regions of Africa and Asia. Since the Bronze Age, people have used dried henna, ground into a paste, to dye skin, hair, fingernails, leather, silk and wood.

Traditionally, henna designs include flowers, leaves, squiggles, animal motifs (elephants and peacocks were common), paisleys and images of gods and goddesses.

"Mehndi are temporary works of art created by painting with henna plant extract. Mehndi is a traditional art form that dates back to before the twelfth century AD. Henna stain found on the fingers and toes of the pharaohs has led some to believe that mehndi can be traced back to ancient Egypt. Indian weddings are not complete without a mehndi ceremony where the bride's hands and feet are adorned with henna ink." Stacy Sturgell *

Advanced Preparation

Lay out paper and pencils.

Hand out permanent markers as needed.

Have pattern examples at each table.

Tips & Tricks

- Allow plenty of time for the students to complete their pattern drawings. Guide them to stay inside the lines. Leave examples sheets of lines and shapes on the tables for them as they draw.
- If students' attention span doesn't allow for intense detail, then you can modify the lesson to have them paint inside the handprint with a warm color vs. a cool color background, or vice versa.

Discussion Points

Discuss the patterns shown on examples. Discuss how the shapes flow from one type to another. Show different types of lines: straight, scallops, zig zags, thick and thin lines. Show different types of shapes: geometric, organic, dots, repeating patterns. Discuss radial designs.

Reflection Point (Assessment of Learning Objectives)

Does the student display a variety of lines and shapes? Repeating patterns? Does the student display the concept of radial symmetry?

Students could regroup at the end and point out examples of patterns/repetition in each other's work, or if teacher can do that quickly for each. It's better to talk about each artwork quickly than to spend too much time on one. Also mention 1 or 2 vocabulary words each time, changing them up when possible. "I see a vertical and horizontal line pattern here" "I see the radial symmetry in this one," etc.

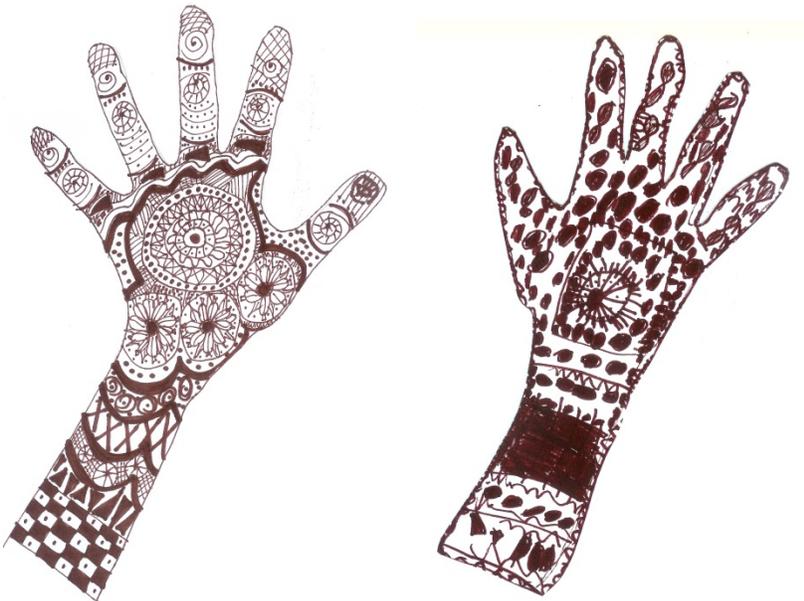
Instructions for Lesson

1. Demonstrate the process of tracing around your hand for students.
2. Student will place one hand and 3 to 5 inches of their forearm on the paper.
3. Using pencil, have another student trace lightly along the hand and forearm.
4. Instruct students to switch to help each other.
5. Students then trace over the pencil lines of their own handprint with a fine point marker.
6. An adult helper can add a dot in the center of each student's handprint for that student to begin pattern work from.
7. Start from a central point in the middle of the hand and fill in the hand and arm using the fine point and thicker point markers. Direct them to repeating patterns of shapes and lines. Advise them to fill in the entire arm and hand.

Variation for 3rd to 5th Graders

- Students can trace both hands overlapping, concentrating more on radial symmetry.
- Once they have filled in the hands they can use a wet-on-dry watercolor technique around the outside of the mehndi drawings. Once the outline color is complete, students can rinse their brushes and add water to the paper, causing the outline to bleed out and wash over the paper to the edges.

Examples:



References and Attributions

*SchoolArtsOnline.com: Mastering Mehndi by Stacy Sturgell. School Arts April 2011 Pg 30-31
Mehndi examples from Issaquah Valley Elementary.

Notes for Educators

21st Century Thinking Skills

Goal setting (create patterns), Observing, making connections (between elements of line/pattern & principle of symmetry), Sequencing (steps), Classifying (by vocabulary), Comparing/Contrasting, Problem solving, Decision Making, Analyzing and Evaluating (finished product).

Habits of Mind

Thinking flexibly, persisting, creating, innovating, taking responsible risks, reflecting

WA State Learning Standards

(VA:Cr2.1.1) a. Explore uses of materials and tools to create works of art or design.

(VA:Cr2.2.1) a. Demonstrate safe and proper procedures for using materials, tools, and equipment while making art.

(VA:Cr3.1.1) a. Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art.

(VA:Re7.1.1) a. Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences of one's self and others.

(VA:Re7.2.1) a. Compare images that represent the same subject.

(VA:Cn10.1.1) a. Identify times, places, and reasons by which students make art outside of school.

(VA:Cn11.1.1) a. Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons.

Arts Integration Opportunities

Math: look for simple AB patterns in writing, math, music.

Science: look at radial symmetry in nature.

Social Studies: spend more time on the cultural art of India, or how Mendhi is used in American society. Cut out the hands and use them in a display of unity in the classroom (hand holding, hands overlapped and radiating in a starburst pattern).