



Bancroft Elementary School  
Art Appreciation Program

*Presents*

*“Mt Fuji in Clear Weather”*

*by*

*Hokusai*

1760-1849

*Lesson Summary:*

- *This lesson discusses the Japanese artist, Katsushika Hokusai, and the manner in which he used inventiveness and daring composition in creating his woodblock prints (Ukiyo-e)*
- *Students will create prints using Styrofoam boards and paint sticks*

# VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

## Lesson Information

Artist:	Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849)
Art Title:	"Mt. Fuji in Clear Weather"
Period or Style:	Japanese woodblock printing (Ukiyo-e)
Art Element:	Line
Project/Medium:	Mt. Fuji Block Prints

## Prep-work Required

Discussion:	Familiarize yourself with current lesson details
Art Activity:	Lesson training and check prep drawer for materials

## Presentation Materials

Slides	"Horse-Washing Waterfall"; "Lilies"; "In the Well of the Great Wave Off Kanagawa"; Pink and Red Peonies, "Ripe Persimmons", Mt. Fuji in Clear Weather,	On Thumb Drive in Cabinet
Lesson Plan:	Hokusai	In folder

## Activity Materials

9 x 12 white paper, 6x9 foam board	1 sheet per student
KWIK Sticks solid tempera paint	Enough for tables to share
Rubber brayers, pencils	1 per student
Sponges	Several

# HOKUSAI LESSON

## Lesson Objectives:

- *To introduce students to the life of Japanese artist, Katsushika Hokusai, an important artist as well as a very good teacher.*
- *To learn about the art term “LINE”.*
- *To familiarize students with Japanese woodblock printing (Ukiyo-e) art.*

## **Presentation Timing**

With the students, it is important that you KEEP THE ARTIST DISCUSSION SIMPLE. Remember; spend 20% on the discussion portion and 80% on the art activity.

## Hokusai

- Katsushika Hokusai was born in Japan. Who knows where Japan is? He was born in present-day Tokyo (Edo) and was adopted as a child by a mirror maker. He was interested in drawing from an early age. By the time he was 5 or 6, he was fond of sketching scenes from life. When he was a little older, he worked as a clerk in a large bookstore in Edo, but was fired after a few months for spending too much time reading on the job. Also at an early age, he worked at a library and handled woodblock-printed books.
- When he was 16, he made his living by engraving wooden blocks. At 18, he decided to become a painter and joined the studio of a famous Ukiyo-e artist. Ukiyo-e prints were engraved in wood and were printed in several colors. Ukiyo-e means PICTURES OF THE FLOATING WORLD. These pictures of local landscapes and people were enjoyments that were mass printed and affordable for everyone to enjoy.
- Between 1796 and 1802 he produced a vast number of book illustrations and color prints, perhaps as many as 30,000 that drew their inspiration from the traditions, legends and lives of the Japanese people.
- Hokusai developed an eclectic style and achieved success with surimono

prints ("printed things" for special occasions, such as cards and announcements), picture books and novelettes, album prints, paintings, and ink sketches. He experimented with Western-style perspective and coloring and later concentrated on samurai themes and Chinese subjects.

- He worked with a driving energy and was quite a showman. He once made a picture that was so enormous that it could only be seen from rooftops. Then he painted two sparrows on a single grain of rice!
- Hokusai was the first engraver to paint local landscapes. He always loved ordinary people, sharing their simple beliefs, pleasures and customs. He liked to watch people at work, especially their gestures and movements. He wanted art to be accessible to all classes of people and he developed innovative new methods for teaching art.
- Hokusai created the "Thirty-Six Views" both as a response to an increase in travel by the people of Tokyo (Edo) and as part of a personal obsession with Mount Fuji. It was from this series, that his famous 'The Great Wave' print and 'Fuji in Clear Weather' were created and that secured Hokusai's fame both within Japan and overseas.
- Hokusai used forty to fifty different names during his lifetime, since a Japanese artist was allowed to use a new name every time a social position or style of work changed.
- He married two times and had five children. In his later years, he and a daughter, who was also an artist, lived together.
- Hokusai said that from the time he was 6 years old he had a "mania for drawing" and at 73 he felt he had learned "a little" about structure of nature
- He died in 1849, at the age of 89, saying that if heaven would give him 10 more years he would become a real painter. The last name that he used on his painting was "An Old Man Mad About Art".
- He was a prolific artist, completing more than 30,000 drawings and paintings/prints.

## Line

- Who knows how to draw a line? Then you are on your way to becoming an artist!
- Lines are where all art starts. Lines make shapes and make things seem to move in art. Artists can make you feel things with their art just by changing how thick a line is or how curvy or the direction the line is going in. Lines that go up and down have strength and purpose. Lines that go across are more calm and serene. Often an artist will use bold or jagged lines to mean action or anger. Curvy lines can be fun and whimsical.
- Katsushika Hokusai used rapid, precise lines to create a dramatic sense of movement in his paintings.

## MAKING OF UKIYO-E

Ukiyo-e prints were made using the following procedure:

- The artist produced a master drawing in ink. An assistant, called a hikkō, would then create a tracing (hanshita) of the master.
- Craftsmen glued the hanshita face-down to a block of wood and cut away the areas where the paper was white. This left the drawing, in reverse, as a relief print on the block, but destroyed the hanshita.
- This block was inked and printed, making near-exact copies of the original drawing.
- A first test copy, called a kyōgo-zuri, would be given to the artist for a final check.
- The prints were in turn glued, face-down, to blocks and those areas of the design which were to be printed in a particular color were left in relief. Each of these blocks printed at least one color in the final design.
- The resulting set of woodblocks were inked in different colors and sequentially impressed onto paper. The final print bore the impressions of each of the blocks, some printed more than once to obtain just the right depth of color.

## Art Activity

- Have a variety of solid tempera sticks on the table
- Also have rubber brayers on each table.
- Have the students first put their name and teachers name on the back of their foam and the paper that they will be printing on.
- Have them draw a simple Mt. Fuji landscape design on their foam with a pencil, you will want to show the example and demonstrate. They can add any additional details to the mountain.
- The more lines they have the more interesting the print will be. The lines will show up as white.
- Next step is to color the foam with the solid tempera sticks
- This should be simple-try to have them only use three colors of their choice and not to mix them but fill with planes of pure color.
- Once the foam boards are covered, the tempera paint will dry immediately so it will need to be re-activated. Volunteers take a moist sponge and wipe water all over the white paper where the print will be placed. Be sure not to over saturate paper with water, but make it wet enough for tempera paint to transfer.
- Have them place the white paper over the foam somewhat centered and roll over the paper with the rubber brayer to transfer the paint to the paper.
- Carefully remove the paper, holding the foam down and they will have an original print! Volunteers may need to help with this.
- Students may wipe tempera paint off the foam with a paper towel/wet wipe, recolor it and make a second print on the other side of their white paper.
- Dry both the foam and print on the drying rack when finished. Both can be picked up later and saved for the portfolios at the end of the year.