

AT HOME TEACHING AND LEARNING ROBOT COLLAGRAPHS

WITH DEE ZABEL

YEAR LEVELS: 1 - 8

OVERVIEW

Collagraphs are an excellent introduction to printmaking because they are easy as well as safe to make and achieve great results.

Printmaking has many benefits one of which is that you can reproduce a print many times. In this activity you will make a collagraph plate from found materials and print it using two techniques, with the possible option to extend to a third.

* There are several steps in this activity, and it would be best completed as a series of shorter lessons to allow for making and drying

time. Instructions are included as to how best break up each part of the unit.

DISCUSS

Have you ever put a coin under a sheet of paper and rubbed a crayon over the top? That's called a Rubbing and is actually a very basic form of printmaking! The object or surface underneath the paper is "printed" by rubbing a drawing material over the top. In this case, the print is a copy of the object. Whereas when you print your plate, by inking it up with different mediums, and placing a sheet of paper on top of it, you will get a mirrored image.

To make a collagraph plate, you will basically be making a collage that has a bit of depth and texture. Robots are a fun and straightforward subject matter that lends themselves easily to making a collagraph because you can use simple shapes to make a character and objects like paper clips and safety pins make great mechanical looking additions. Younger students will be able to focus on fine motor development by cutting simple shapes, while older students will be able to make more complex arrangements and intricate designs with shapes and textures. If your student is not interested in robots, adapt the starting point to something else that will excite them. Other starting point ideas could be: animals, under the sea, imaginary creatures, things that fly, vehicles, flowers etc.

This activity is great for linking to sustainability as most of the materials you will need can be repurposed from around the house. To start, it's time to clear out your stash of spare buttons you get with new clothing that never get used! You may even have a stash of safety pins that hold new tags to clothing that you can use as well. Received an online order recently – well hold on to that box! And who knew how handy bread tags could be – they are made to be used to make collagraphs! Cereal boxes, dental flossers, bubble wrap, bobby pins and mesh fruit bags are all winners.

The thinner the better for all materials, because if the collage is too high, you may tear your paper or not get the textures/shapes when you do a rubbing of the plate.

Further extension ideas to connect to English and Design Technology are included in the Extension activity below.

ART ELEMENTS & PRINCIPLES

Shape, Texture, Pattern, Balance

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

Explore

- Watch the movie *Robots* (2005) to tune in to the subject.
(or simply view the trailer here: <https://youtu.be/p9X16KPOgFI>)

Discuss

- What do the robots look like?
- Describe the shapes you see.
- How do these animated robots differ from robots that are designed to help humans?
- What human/non-human features do the animated robots have?
- What is a collagraph? Look at the examples of the robot provided. A collagraph is a type of printmaking. The plate is made by gluing thin pieces of cardboard or other objects to a background. You can then take a rubbing of the plate or you can apply an ink/paint to print from the plate like you would with lino printing.
- What are the benefits of making a plate? (You can reuse it. Print different colours.

Consider

- What happens if the objects you collage have sharp edges or you stack too many on top of one another? (Your paper might tear when rubbing or you might not be able to reach the other lower shapes.)
- What shapes will you use for each of the robot's features?
- What patterns will you have on your robot? What materials will be good to make these patterns on the collagraph plate?
- Is your robot symmetrical or asymmetrical? Will it have two of the same type of arms or will one be large and the other small?

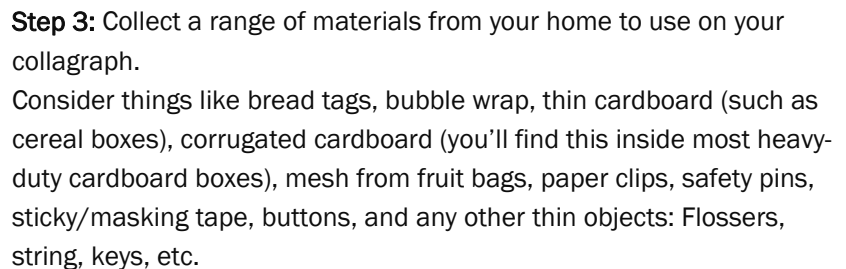
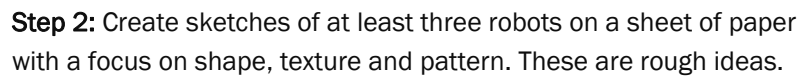
Make

- Draw sketches of three robots to brainstorm ideas.
- Create a collagraph plate by cutting out the main shapes of your robot from cardboard and gluing them to a cardboard plate. Add other (thin) found-objects and materials to your collage.
- Create a rubbing from your plate.
- Cover your plate in aluminium foil, colour with markers and print on to paper.

- Create colourful backgrounds on paper and print your robot on top using acrylic paint.
- When you are finished printing your robot, paint the plate a metallic colour to keep as a finished artwork.

Part One:

Step 1: Watch the movie Robots (2005) to tune in to the subject.
(or simply view the trailer here: <https://youtu.be/p9X16KP0gFI>)



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Step 5: Select your favourite robot drawing and cut up / prepare your materials to recreate the robot as a textural collage. Look carefully at the shapes and patterns you have drawn and try to select materials to best replicate your design.

- Start by cutting out background shapes such as the head or body. These will need to be glued down first and other features layered on top.
- Remember not to make your collage too “tall”. If you have too many different heights of your objects you risk losing details or tearing the paper when printing.
- A hole punch can assist with making interesting patterns in card; use both the positive and the negative shapes created.

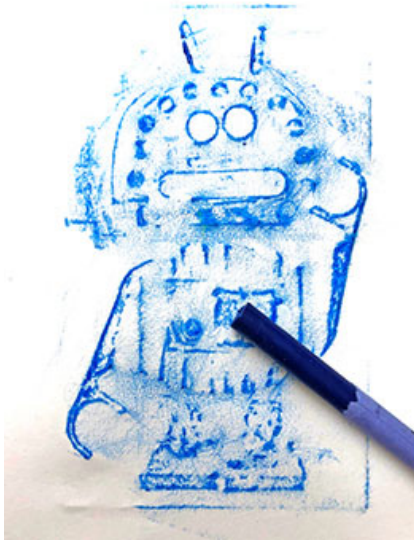
**You will need a good glue to hold tricky objects like paper clips in place. Consider using a good craft glue or Supertac.*

Once you have completed your robot collage, set aside and allow to fully dry.



Step 6: When your collage is dry, seal with two coats of PVA glue (or Mod Podge). Allow to dry between coats.

This will give your plate added durability for printing.



Part Three: Create a Rubbing of the Robot

Step 7: When both coats of PVA / Modpodge are fully dry, it's time to create a rubbing from the plate.

Place the plate on a flat surface. Lay a sheet of paper over the top.

Use one hand to hold the paper in place and use the other hand to rub a crayon over the plate - being careful not to push too hard as the paper could tear.

Experiment using different colours.

**Encourage your students to do multiple rubbings to practise the right amount of pressure required to get a good print. This will also produce multiple prints to hand colour and individualise in different ways.*

**Consider painting over with a wash of watercolour paint. The watercolour will resist the wax crayon, so you can paint directly over the robot. Choose a contrasting or complimentary colour to make your robot stand out.*



Part 4: Print the Robot

Step 8: When you've finished making rubbings, cover the collagraph plate with Aluminium Foil and secure with tape on the back.

Rest the plate on a firm surface and place a sheet of paper over the top. Rub over the paper firmly to push the foil into the plate. (The paper will help ensure you do not push through the foil)

For more detailed parts of the plate carefully use your fingertips to press around the shape beneath the foil.



Step 9: Next it's time to "ink up" your plate by colouring the foil robot with water-based markers. Choose contrasting colours, such as warm colours for your robot and cool colours for your background, or vice versa.

Step 10: Lightly wet a sheet of paper by brushing it over with a clean, wet paint brush dipped in a little water.



Step 11: Sit your plate on a flat surface and place the damp paper face-down on top. Gently press/rub the back of the paper, then peel back to carefully reveal your print. Allow to dry.

EXTENSION

Extension 1: Printing with Acrylic Paints

Try inking-up your plate using acrylic paint. Use a sponge to dab paint onto the robot, making sure to get into the textures. Try to avoid getting paint on the background.

Place a sheet of paper on top to print. Rub firmly with your hand or the back of a spoon will help apply more pressure.

You may need to do a few test prints to figure out the combination of paint and pressure needed to get a good print.

Extend your students further by creating interesting backgrounds to print on. Try marbling, applying washes, or collaging tissue paper on to your piece of paper as starting points before printing.

Extension 2: Painting Collagraph Plate as a final piece

When you are all finished printing with the plate; paint it with a metallic paint.

Allow to dry, then mount the work onto a sheet of coloured cardboard or paper for a finished artwork.

Extension 3: Story Writing

Encourage your students to write a story about the robot.

Extension 4: What does your Robot do?

Choose one of the robot designs to draw again as a new artwork with annotations.

- Consider what the robot would be built for?
- How would it help humans with different tasks?

Label/annotate the design with information about what materials the parts of the robot are made from and how they function.

DISCUSSION / REFLECTION

- What was challenging when making your robot?
- What was challenging when doing a rubbing of your robot?
When printing your robot?
- What materials worked best to create textures and patterns when you did the rubbings?
- Did you find that after practising a few rubbings, the techniques became easier?
- Do you prefer the rubbing on its own or do you like the print with a background better? Why?

MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

- Paper
- Cardboard
- Glue (PVA or similar)
- Aluminium Foil
- Masking Tape
- Paint Brush
- Scissors
- Hole Punch (optional)
- Mod Podge (optional)
- Recycled Found Objects,
such as:
 - Bread Tags
 - Bubble Wrap
 - Torn / Corrugated Cardboard
 - Thin Cardboard (cereal boxes, etc)
 - Sticky Tape
 - Mesh from Fruit/Vegetable bags
 - Paper Clips
 - Safety Pins
 - Buttons
 - Old Keys
 - Flossers

*make sure the collage objects are thin, and not too sharp.

INSPIRATION

**RELATED ARTWORK,
LINKS & SOURCES**

Watch the movie Robots (2005) or you can just watch the trailer on YouTube for inspiration

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9X16KPOgFI&t=23s>