Name: _____ Date: _____

Two Ways to Build a Mosaic Floor

Circle group

A mosaic is a picture made of many tiny pieces. The pieces are called tesserae. They may be cut from stone, glass, or clay. Some mosaics made by Roman workers long ago are still on floors today. That shows how long the craft can last.

An artist can pick one of two ways to build a mosaic. In the direct way, the artist presses each piece into a soft bed of cement or glue. The bed is right where the mosaic will stay. The artist can see the picture grow. If a piece looks wrong, the artist can change it. This way works well on walls and on curved shapes.

The indirect way is not the same. The artist glues the pieces face down on paper. The design on the paper is in reverse. Later, workers carry the paper to the final place and press it into the cement. Then they wash off the paper to show the pieces. This way makes it easy to build big mosaics in a workshop. It also keeps the surface flat. But the artist cannot see the front of the picture until the end.

With either way, the artist cuts each piece with nippers. The artist leaves small gaps between the pieces. Grout fills the gaps and locks the picture in place.

Questions

1. What are tesserae?

_____

_____

2. Where does the artist press the pieces in the direct way?

_____

_____

3. How are the pieces placed on paper in the indirect way?

_____

_____

4. What is one good thing about the direct way?

_____

_____

5. Why might an artist pick the indirect way for a big floor?

_____

_____

6. What is the main problem with the indirect way?

_____

_____

Words to know

mosaic: a picture made of many small pieces fitted together
tesserae: the tiny pieces used to make a mosaic
nippers: a tool with sharp jaws used to snip small pieces
grout: a paste that fills the gaps between tiles
reverse: turned the opposite way, like a mirror image

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Two Ways to Build a Mosaic Floor

Triangle group

A mosaic is a picture made from hundreds or thousands of tiny pieces. The pieces, often called tesserae, may be cut from stone, glass, or ceramic. Some mosaics made by Roman workers long ago are still on floors today, which shows how well the craft can last.

A mosaic artist usually chooses between two methods. In the direct method, the artist presses each piece straight into a soft bed of cement or glue on the surface where the mosaic will stay. This lets the artist see the picture as it grows and change a piece if it looks wrong. It works well on walls and on shapes that curve, because the artist is already working in the right place.

The indirect method is different. The artist glues the pieces face down onto a sheet of paper that holds the design in reverse. Later, workers carry the paper to the final site and press it into the cement, then wash away the paper to reveal the pieces. This makes it easier to build large mosaics in a workshop and to keep the surface flat. The artist, however, cannot see the front of the picture until the end.

Whichever method is used, the artist cuts each piece with nippers and leaves narrow gaps between them. Those gaps are filled with grout, which locks everything together and gives the picture clear edges.

Questions

1. What are tesserae?

_____

_____

2. In the direct method, where does the artist press the pieces?

_____

_____

3. In the indirect method, how are the pieces first placed on the paper?

_____

_____

4. What is one good thing about the direct method?

_____

_____

5. Why might an artist choose the indirect method for a very large floor?

_____

_____

6. What is the main drawback of the indirect method?

_____

_____

Words to know

mosaic: a picture made of many small pieces fitted together
tesserae: the tiny pieces used to make a mosaic
nippers: a tool with sharp jaws used to snip small pieces
grout: a paste that fills the gaps between tiles
reverse: turned the opposite way, like a mirror image

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Two Ways to Build a Mosaic Floor

Square group

A mosaic is a picture assembled from hundreds or even thousands of tiny pieces. These pieces, frequently called tesserae, may be cut from stone, glass, or ceramic. Certain mosaics created by Roman workers long ago are still visible on floors today, which demonstrates how remarkably durable the craft can be.

A mosaic artist usually chooses between two methods. In the direct method, the artist presses each piece straight into a soft bed of cement or glue on the very surface where the mosaic will remain. This approach allows the artist to watch the picture take shape and to replace any piece that looks wrong. It works especially well on walls and on curved shapes, because the artist is already working in exactly the right place.

The indirect method is quite different. The artist glues the pieces face down onto a sheet of paper that carries the design in reverse. Later, workers transport the paper to the final site, press it into the cement, and wash the paper away to reveal the pieces. This makes it far easier to construct large mosaics in a workshop and to keep the surface perfectly flat. The disadvantage is that the artist cannot see the front of the picture until the very end.

Whichever method is chosen, the artist cuts each piece with nippers and leaves narrow gaps between them. Those gaps are filled with grout, which binds everything together and gives the picture crisp, clear edges.

Questions

1. What are tesserae?

_____

_____

2. Where does the artist press the pieces when using the direct method?

_____

_____

3. How are the pieces first placed on the paper in the indirect method?

_____

_____

4. What advantage does the direct method give the artist?

_____

_____

5. Why might an artist select the indirect method for a very large floor?

_____

_____

6. What is the chief disadvantage of the indirect method?

_____

_____

Words to know

mosaic: a picture made of many small pieces fitted together
tesserae: the tiny pieces used to make a mosaic
nippers: a tool with sharp jaws used to snip small pieces
grout: a paste that fills the gaps between tiles
reverse: turned the opposite way, like a mirror image

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Two Ways to Build a Mosaic Floor

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Two Ways to Build a Mosaic Floor

Easier · 218 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.1

1. The tiny pieces of stone, glass, or clay in a mosaic.
2. Into a soft bed of cement or glue where the mosaic will stay.
3. Face down.
4. The artist can see the picture grow and change a piece that looks wrong.
5. It can be built in a workshop and keeps the surface flat.
6. The artist cannot see the front of the picture until the end.

Triangle: Two Ways to Build a Mosaic Floor

This passage · 229 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7

1. The tiny pieces of stone, glass, or ceramic used to make a mosaic.
2. Straight into a soft bed of cement or glue where the mosaic will stay.
3. Face down.
4. The artist can see the picture grow and change a piece that looks wrong.
5. It can be built in a workshop and keeps the surface flat.
6. The artist cannot see the front of the picture until the end.

Square: Two Ways to Build a Mosaic Floor

Harder · 242 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.7

1. The tiny pieces of stone, glass, or ceramic that make up a mosaic.
2. Straight into a soft bed of cement or glue on the surface where the mosaic will remain.
3. Face down, with the design in reverse.
4. The artist can watch the picture take shape and replace any piece that looks wrong.
5. It can be constructed in a workshop and keeps the surface flat.
6. The artist cannot see the front of the picture until the end.