Name: _____ Date: _____

Mending a Cracked Bowl with Powdered Gold

Circle group

Most people who break a favorite bowl throw the pieces away. In Japan, craftspeople had another idea long ago. It is called kintsugi, which means "golden joinery." It is a way to mend broken pottery so the cracks become a feature instead of a flaw.

The work is slow. First the repairer collects every piece and cleans the edges. A natural lacquer, made from tree sap, is the glue. The pieces are fitted together. The lacquer is left to cure in a damp, safe place. This can take days. Then a thin line of fresh lacquer is painted along each crack. While it is still sticky, fine gold powder is dusted on. When it is polished, the seam shines like a bright river.

Why show the damage? One answer is respect. A bowl that has been used for years has a history. A repair shows that someone cared enough to save it. Another reason is that mending an old piece wastes less than buying a new one.

The idea has spread around the world. People use it to mend mugs, plates and vases. Many find it calming. Each shard takes patience, and one rushed move can spoil the work. The bowl is not like the original, but it is often more interesting.

Questions

1. What does the word kintsugi mean?

_____

_____

2. What is used as the glue in kintsugi?

_____

_____

3. What is dusted onto the lacquer line while it is still sticky?

_____

_____

4. Why is the lacquer left in a damp, safe place?

_____

_____

5. What does a gold repair say about a bowl?

_____

_____

6. Why might learners find kintsugi calming?

_____

_____

Words to know

kintsugi: a Japanese way of mending pottery with gold
lacquer: a hard, shiny coating made from natural sap
cure: to harden or dry until strong
shard: a broken piece of pottery or glass

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: _____

Mending a Cracked Bowl with Powdered Gold

Triangle group

Most people who break a favorite bowl sweep up the pieces and throw them away. In Japan, craftspeople developed another idea long ago. Called kintsugi, which means "golden joinery," it is a way of repairing broken pottery so that the cracks become a feature of the bowl rather than a flaw.

The work is slow. First the repairer collects every piece and cleans the broken edges. A natural lacquer, made from the sap of a certain tree, is used as the glue. The pieces are fitted together, and the lacquer is left to cure in a damp, protected space, a step that can take days. Extra bumps are smoothed down, and a thin line of fresh lacquer is painted along each crack. While it is still tacky, fine gold powder is dusted onto it. When the surface is polished, the seam shines like a bright river across the clay.

Why would anyone want to highlight damage? One answer is respect for the object. A bowl that has been used and cared for over many years has a history, and a repair shows that someone valued it enough to save it. Another reason is practical. Mending an old piece can be less wasteful than replacing it, especially when the original was handmade.

The idea has spread to workshops around the world, where people use it to repair mugs, plates and vases. Many learners find it surprisingly calming. Matching each shard takes patience, and one rushed move can spoil the work. The result is a piece that is not exactly like the original, but is often more interesting to look at.

Questions

1. What does the word kintsugi mean?

_____

_____

2. What is used as the glue in traditional kintsugi?

_____

_____

3. What is dusted onto the lacquer line while it is still tacky?

_____

_____

4. Why is the lacquer left in a damp, protected space?

_____

_____

5. According to the passage, what does a gold repair say about a bowl?

_____

_____

6. Why might learners find kintsugi calming?

_____

_____

Words to know

kintsugi: a Japanese way of mending pottery with gold
lacquer: a hard, shiny coating made from natural sap
cure: to harden or dry until strong
tacky: slightly sticky to the touch
shard: a broken piece of pottery or glass

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: _____

Mending a Cracked Bowl with Powdered Gold

Square group

Most people who break a favorite bowl simply sweep up the fragments and discard them. In Japan, however, craftspeople developed a very different philosophy long ago. Known as kintsugi, which means "golden joinery," it is a method of repairing broken pottery so that the cracks become a distinctive feature of the bowl rather than a flaw to be hidden.

The work is painstakingly slow. First the repairer gathers every piece and cleans the broken edges. A natural lacquer, made from the sap of a certain tree, serves as the adhesive. The pieces are fitted together, and the lacquer is left to cure in a damp, protected space, a stage that can last for several days. Surplus bumps are smoothed away, and a thin line of fresh lacquer is painted along each crack. While it is still tacky, fine gold powder is dusted over it. Once the surface has been polished, the seam glows like a bright river running across the clay.

Why would anyone choose to highlight damage? One answer is respect for the object itself. A bowl that has been used and cherished for many years carries a history, and a repair demonstrates that someone valued it enough to rescue it. A second reason is more practical: mending an old piece can be far less wasteful than replacing it, particularly when the original was made by hand.

The idea has since spread to workshops across the world, where people use it to restore mugs, plates and vases. Many learners find the work surprisingly calming. Matching each shard demands patience, and a single rushed movement can spoil everything. The result is not identical to the original, but it is frequently more interesting to look at.

Questions

1. What does the word kintsugi mean?

_____

_____

2. What serves as the adhesive in traditional kintsugi?

_____

_____

3. What is dusted over the lacquer line while it is still tacky?

_____

_____

4. Why is the lacquer left in a damp, protected space?

_____

_____

5. According to the passage, what does a gold repair demonstrate about a bowl?

_____

_____

6. Why might learners find kintsugi so calming?

_____

_____

Words to know

kintsugi: a Japanese way of mending pottery with gold
lacquer: a hard, shiny coating made from natural sap
cure: to harden or dry until strong
tacky: slightly sticky to the touch
shard: a broken piece of pottery or glass

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: Mending a Cracked Bowl with Powdered Gold

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

Circle: Mending a Cracked Bowl with Powdered Gold

Easier · 212 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4

1. Golden joinery.
2. A natural lacquer made from tree sap.
3. Fine gold powder.
4. So it can cure, which can take days.
5. That someone cared enough to save it, and it has a history.
6. It takes patience and slow work, and a rushed move can spoil it.

Triangle: Mending a Cracked Bowl with Powdered Gold

This passage · 269 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.9

1. Golden joinery.
2. A natural lacquer made from tree sap.
3. Fine gold powder.
4. So it can cure, which can take days.
5. That someone valued it enough to save it, and it has a history.
6. It takes patience and slow, careful work, and a rushed move can spoil it.

Square: Mending a Cracked Bowl with Powdered Gold

Harder · 285 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.5

1. Golden joinery.
2. A natural lacquer made from the sap of a certain tree.
3. Fine gold powder.
4. So that it can cure, a stage that can last several days.
5. That someone valued it enough to rescue it, and that it carries a history.
6. It demands patience and slow, careful work, and a rushed movement can spoil it.