Name: _____ Date: _____

Why a Linocut Print Comes Out Backward

Circle group

An artist can carve a picture into a block of linoleum. It teaches a quick lesson. The picture on the block and the picture on the paper are mirror images. A letter that looks right on the block will look backward in the print. So artists plan for this from the start.

The artist draws a design on the soft, smooth block. Then small tools with curved or pointed tips cut away the parts that should stay white. What is left is a raised pattern, like a rubber stamp. The tools are sharp. So careful artists push the blade away from their hands.

Next comes the ink. A roller spreads a thin coat of ink on the raised parts. The carved grooves stay clean because they are lower. Then the artist lays paper on the block and presses it with a spoon or a small press. The paper touches the block face down. So left and right swap places. That is why the print is backward.

One block can make many prints. Some artists use more blocks to add colors. Many make a test print first. Then they carve a little more if a spot looks wrong.

Questions

1. What part of the linoleum does the artist carve away?

_____

_____

2. Why do the carved grooves stay clean when the roller is used?

_____

_____

3. How is the paper pressed onto the inked block?

_____

_____

4. Why does the picture come out backward on the paper?

_____

_____

5. If an artist wants a word to read right, what must be done on the block?

_____

_____

6. Why might an artist make a test print first?

_____

_____

Words to know

linoleum: a smooth, firm material that is easy to carve
raised: standing higher than the area around it

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: _____

Why a Linocut Print Comes Out Backward

Triangle group

A printmaker who carves a message into a block of linoleum learns a lesson quickly: the picture on the block and the picture on the paper are mirror images of each other. A letter that looks correct on the block will appear backward in the print. Experienced artists plan for this from the very start.

The process begins with a design drawn on the soft, smooth surface of the linoleum. Using small gouges with curved or pointed tips, the artist cuts away every part that should stay white. What remains standing is a raised pattern, like the top of a rubber stamp. The tools are sharp, so careful carvers always push the blade away from their own hands and keep their fingers behind it.

Next comes the ink. A roller spreads a thin, even coat across the raised areas, and the carved grooves stay clean because they sit lower than the roller can reach. A sheet of paper is then laid on top, and the artist presses it down with a spoon, a wooden tool or a small press. When the paper is peeled away, the inked shape has moved onto it. Because the paper touches the block face down, left and right swap places, which explains the reversal.

The real advantage of the method is repetition. One carved block can produce dozens of matching prints, and some artists add a second or third block to layer more colors. Many make a test print before they finish, then carve a little more if a spot looks wrong. In block printing, the carving is permanent, but each print offers a fresh chance to see the work from the other side.

Questions

1. What part of the linoleum does the artist carve away?

_____

_____

2. Why do the carved grooves stay clean when the roller is used?

_____

_____

3. How is the paper pressed onto the inked block?

_____

_____

4. Why does the picture come out backward on the paper?

_____

_____

5. If an artist wants a word to read correctly, what must be done on the block?

_____

_____

6. Why might an artist make a test print before finishing?

_____

_____

Words to know

linoleum: a smooth, firm material that is easy to carve
gouge: a carving tool with a curved or pointed blade
raised: standing higher than the area around it
reversal: a change to the opposite direction
layer: to place one thing over another

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: _____

Why a Linocut Print Comes Out Backward

Square group

A printmaker who carves an image into a block of linoleum learns one lesson almost immediately: the picture on the block and the picture on the paper are mirror images of one another. A letter that appears perfectly correct on the block will come out backward in the finished print. Experienced artists therefore plan for this reversal from the very beginning.

The process starts with a design drawn onto the soft, smooth surface of the linoleum. Using small gouges with curved or pointed tips, the artist cuts away every area that is meant to remain white. What is left standing is a raised pattern, much like the face of a rubber stamp. Because the tools are extremely sharp, careful carvers always push the blade away from their own hands and keep their fingers safely behind it.

Next comes the ink. A roller spreads a thin, even layer across the raised surfaces, while the carved grooves remain clean because they lie below the reach of the roller. A sheet of paper is then laid over the block, and the artist presses it down with a spoon, a wooden tool or a small press. When the paper is peeled away, the inked shape has transferred onto it. Since the paper meets the block face down, left and right trade places, which fully explains the reversal.

The real strength of the method is repetition. A single carved block can produce dozens of matching prints, and some artists add a second or third block in order to layer additional colors. Many make a test print before they consider the work finished, then carve a little more wherever a spot looks wrong. In block printing, the carving is permanent, yet each print offers a fresh opportunity to see the work from the other side.

Questions

1. What part of the linoleum does the artist cut away?

_____

_____

2. Why do the carved grooves stay clean when the roller is used?

_____

_____

3. How is the paper pressed down onto the inked block?

_____

_____

4. Why does the image come out backward on the paper?

_____

_____

5. If an artist wants a word to read correctly in the print, what must be done on the block?

_____

_____

6. Why might an artist make a test print before the work is finished?

_____

_____

Words to know

linoleum: a smooth, firm material that is easy to carve
gouge: a carving tool with a curved or pointed blade
raised: standing higher than the area around it
reversal: a change to the opposite direction
layer: to place one thing over another

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: Why a Linocut Print Comes Out Backward

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

Circle: Why a Linocut Print Comes Out Backward

Easier · 197 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.3

1. The parts that should stay white.
2. They are lower than the raised parts, so the roller misses them.
3. With a spoon or a small press.
4. The block touches the paper face down, so left and right swap.
5. Carve the word backward.
6. To see if a spot looks wrong and needs more carving.

Triangle: Why a Linocut Print Comes Out Backward

This passage · 279 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.8

1. The parts that should stay white in the print.
2. They sit lower than the raised areas, so the roller does not reach them.
3. With a spoon, a wooden tool or a small press.
4. The block touches the paper face down, so left and right swap places.
5. Carve the word backward, as a mirror image.
6. To see whether any spot looks wrong and needs more carving.

Square: Why a Linocut Print Comes Out Backward

Harder · 299 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.5

1. Every area that is meant to remain white in the print.
2. They lie lower than the raised areas, beyond the reach of the roller.
3. With a spoon, a wooden tool or a small press.
4. The block meets the paper face down, so left and right trade places.
5. Carve the word backward, as a mirror image.
6. To check whether any spot looks wrong and needs more carving.