



## Tapa Cloth Designs

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**Subject:** Visual Arts, Social Studies

**Media:** Painting

### Selected Artwork:



*Tapa Cloth*

Late 19th- early 20th century

Maui, Hawaiian Islands

Bark cloth

Bequest of Gilbert M. Denman, Jr.

2005.1.133

### Objectives:

- Learners will explore Oceanic tapa cloth.
- Learners will use geometric shapes to paint their own geometric design.

### About the Artwork:

Tapa cloth is a bark cloth made in Oceanic cultures, primarily on the islands of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga. Tapa cloth is also found in Hawaii, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

It is usually made from tissue-thin strips of bark from the mulberry tree. Originally used for clothing, tapa cloth has since been replaced by cotton and other textiles. Tapa cloth is still used for ceremonial clothing, blankets and decorative wall hangings.

The surface of the delicate bark cloth is typically painted with geometric shapes such as squares and triangles, using a palette of black, brown and white pigments. The colors and motifs found on tapa cloth vary among cultures in the Middle and South Pacific.



### Vocabulary:

- Pattern- Pattern is the repeating of an object or symbol all over the work of art.
- Geometric- Resembling or using the simple rectilinear or curvilinear lines used in geometry.

### Materials:

- 6 x 9" bark paper (brown butcher or construction paper can be substituted)
- 6 x 9" white bond paper for design template
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Rulers
- Black, brown and white tempera paint
- Paintbrushes
- Optional: geometric shape templates cut from cardstock (triangles and squares)

### Process:

1. Discuss the materials and use of the tapa cloth.
2. Distribute the white bond paper, pencils, rulers and erasers to learners.
3. Each learner will create a design template of their tapa cloth design. The optional geometric shape templates can be used at this time. Each design should allow for a half-inch border.
4. Using a pencil and ruler, students will draw their design on the bark or brown paper.
5. Learners will paint their finished designs with a palette of black, brown and white tempera paint.
6. Once the tapa cloth paintings are dry, they can be displayed.

### TEKS:

#### Visual Art:

117.32.1 Perception. The student develops and organizes ideas from the environment.

117.32.2 Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill.

117.32.3 Historical/cultural heritage. The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture as records of human achievement.

#### Social Studies:

113.18.15 Culture. The student understands the similarities and differences within and among cultures in various world societies.



San Antonio  
Museum  
of Art

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