



Embossing Gold Foil Lesson Plan

Grade Level: Elementary School

Subject: Visual Arts, Social Studies, Science

Media: Sculpture

Selected Artwork:



Face with Serpent Tresses
Peru, Nazca culture, ca. 100 B.C. – A.D. 200
Gold
San Antonio Museum of Art
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lindsay Duff
2004.25.3

Theme:

Students will explore an embossed gold facial plaque from the Nazca culture of the Andes and then create their own embossed metal foil design.

About the Artwork:

Embossed gold objects have been produced in many cultures. The art of embossing metal is referred to as *repujada* in Spanish and *repoussé* in French. The embossed gold found in the Andean region included ceremonial objects such as cups and jewelry. This thin gold mask was probably sewn onto a ceremonial headdress and would have been worn by an elite member of Nazca society. It may have represented the sun due to its shiny, reflective surface. Gold is a natural metal which has always been highly valued across cultures. It is the most malleable pure metal known and will not oxidize when exposed to air or water. A symbol of wealth in many cultures and a standard of currency, gold is also used in dentistry and electronics. Gold was not considered the most precious material in ancient Mesoamerican cultures before 1521.

Enduring Idea:

The meaning and importance of gold varies from culture to culture across history and was one of several materials used for ceremonial purposes in the Americas before 1521. Connections can be made between the material used in artwork and what its purpose may have been.

Overarching Understandings:

- The use of gold for crafting ceremonial objects dates back over 2000 years in the Americas.
- The value of gold varies from culture to culture and across historical periods.
- Gold is a material with unique properties, allowing artists to create distinctive works of art.
- Observing original works of art can be understand the past and inform our own creative process.



Essential Questions:

- Which materials represent value and importance to you, and why?
- What other materials or colors could be used to symbolize the sun? Which materials or colors could be used to represent other elements or celestial objects?
- How does the malleability of gold foil make it different than other art media? What effects are you able to achieve with foil that you are unable to achieve with other media?
- What are symbols or imagery that have special meaning to you?

Understandings and Outcomes:

Students will be able to-

- Explore the principles of gold which make it valuable across many cultures, inspired by a gold plaque from the Nazca culture that employs the *repujada* technique.
- Think about the possible connections between the material of the artwork and how the artwork may be have used.
- Create embossed metal foil with their own unique design.

Discussion:

Ask students to silently look at the suggested artwork. Give them several minutes to look closely.

Discuss *Face with Serpent Tresses* with students using the following suggested prompts:

- What do you see in the artwork?
- What could it represent?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What could be the story behind this artwork?
- What image would you consider creating in gold?

Vocabulary:

Emboss- to raise patterns on the surface of metal, leather, textiles, paper, and other similar substances.

Repujada/Repoussé- a metalworking technique in which a malleable metal is shaped by pressing tools or hammering from the reverse side to create a design in low relief.

Chasing- is used to refine the design on the front of the work by sinking the metal.

Materials:

- Gold colored metal foil
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Bond paper cut to size of foil for design template
- Folded construction paper, newspaper, or foam sheet for cushioning foil
- Optional: Embossing tools or stylus

Process:

1. Discuss the art of embossing foil and demonstrate how to make raised lines (from the reverse side) and incised lines (on the front side) on the foil.
2. Ask students to think about personal imagery or symbols. Think about the type of image that would work on metal, designs should not be too detailed.
3. Students will draw their design on a piece of paper the same size as the foil.



4. The design paper is placed over the foil, and learners will trace the initial design using a pencil or stylus. Be sure to have a cushion under the foil to allow for embossing to occur.
5. The initial design can be reworked once it is traced by working directly onto the front or reverse surface of the foil.
6. The embossed design can be left as a square or cut around the border of the design to create a shaped artwork.

Extensions:

- Finished designs can be mounted on cardstock or construction paper using Tacky glue.
- Colored Sharpies can be used to enhance the finished design.

Standards:

TEKS:

§117.202. Art, Middle School 1, Adopted 2013.

(c) (1) Foundations: observation and perception. The student develops and expands visual literacy skills using critical thinking, imagination, and the senses to observe and explore the world by learning about, understanding, and applying the elements of art, principles of design, and expressive qualities. The student uses what the student sees, knows, and has experienced as sources for examining, understanding, and creating original artworks. The student is expected to: (A) identify and illustrate concepts from direct observation, original sources, personal experiences, and communities such as family, school, cultural, local, regional, national, and international

(c) (2) Creative expression. The student communicates ideas through original artworks using a variety of media with appropriate skills. The student expresses thoughts and ideas creatively while challenging the imagination, fostering reflective thinking, and developing disciplined effort and progressive problem-solving skills. The student is expected to: (A) create original artworks based on direct observations, original sources, personal experiences, and the community; (B) apply the art-making process to solve problems and generate design solutions; and (C) produce artworks, including drawings, paintings, prints, sculptures/modeled forms, ceramics, fiber art, photographic imagery, and digital art and media, using a variety of materials.

§112.B. Science, Grade 6.

(6) Matter and energy (A) compare metals, nonmetals, and metalloids using physical properties such as luster, conductivity, or malleability.

§113.18. Social Studies, Grade 6, Adopted 2018.

(a) (2) To support the teaching of the essential knowledge and skills, the use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material such as biographies, autobiographies, novels, speeches, letters, poetry, songs, and artworks is encouraged. Motivating resources are available from museums, art galleries, and historical sites.

(b) (16) Culture. The student understands the relationship that exists between the arts and the societies in which they are produced. The student is expected to: (A) explain the relationships that exist between societies and their architecture, art, music, and literature; (B) describe ways in which contemporary issues influence creative expressions; and (C) identify examples of art, music, and literature that convey universal themes such as religion, justice, and the passage of time.

National Standards: 6th Grade

VA:Cr1.2.6a Formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art.

VA:Cr2.1.6a Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design.