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Patterns from the British Isles

Tartan

Tartan is a chequered pattern that has been used in weaving for centuries. The colours, and the sequence in which they are used, identify individual clans and give a sense of belonging to groups of people who are in some way related e.g. the British Royal family uses the Royal Stewart tartan because of their ancestral links to James IV of Scotland. Today new tartans are invented and registered every year. As well as Scottish tartans there are Canadian tartans, American tartans (plaid), Northern English tartans, Welsh tartans and Cornish tartans.

Equipment Needed

Squares of sugar paper in assorted colours (16 x 16 cm approx.), thick and thin strips of sugar paper in assorted colours, glue, scissors and examples of several different tartan patterns.

Talk About

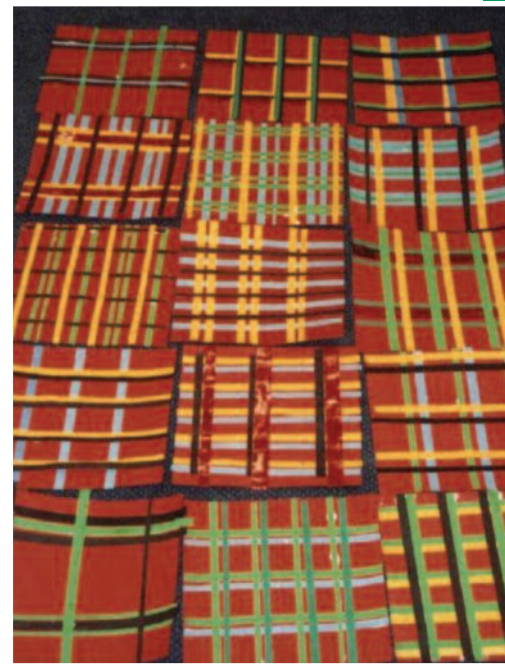
- Where the countries that favour tartan are found on a world map and on a map of the British Isles.
- Finding examples of tartan patterns from these different countries on the Internet.
- The way the lines are arranged to form a tartan pattern - across each other, next to each other, over and under each other plus the different thicknesses of the lines. Ask the children to touch and follow different lines in a pattern.
- The number of colours used in each of the examples of tartan.
- Arranging strips of paper on a coloured square to make a tartan pattern.
- Where to put the glue to stick the pattern down and how much glue to use.
- How to trim the strips if they extend over the edges of the square (turn the square over once the strips have been stuck down to make it easy to cut off any extra bits).



Doing

- Decide on the colour scheme you are going to use for your pattern and choose a selection of thick and thin strips that match it plus a square of coloured paper as the background.

- Arrange the strips across and up and down the background square to make a tartan pattern – you may need to get more strips to complete your pattern. Remember the same colours must be repeated in the same sequence throughout.



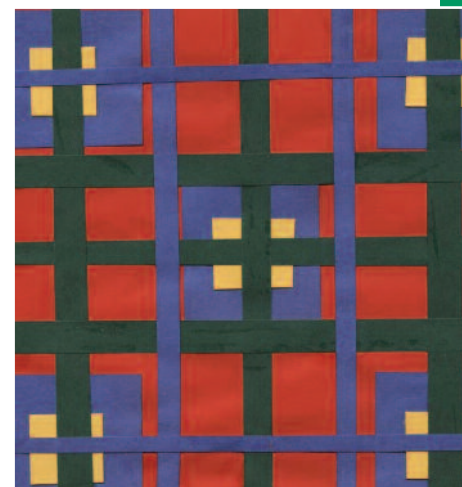
You may need to try several arrangements before you have the pattern you want to keep.

- Get some glue and carefully stick your pattern down then trim off any strips that extend over the edge of the background.



Display

Put examples of actual tartan patterns in the centre of the display board plus information about tartan and the names of some of the different tartans. Arrange the children's work around the edge of this, each piece touching the one next to it. Leave the work unmounted and add a plain border around the edge of the board.



Patterns from Europe

Polish Paper Cuts - Wycinanki

Wycinanki is a traditional Polish folk art. In past times country folk cut intricate mirror designs from paper, often using shears as their tool to do so. Roosters, flowers and geometric shapes were popular designs. These cut outs were used to decorate the beams and walls inside their houses particularly at Easter and Christmas when their homes were given a fresh coat of white paint. At this time the old Wycinanki were thrown out and new ones made. Wycinanki vary in different regions, in some they are of a single colour whereas in others they are multi-coloured.

Equipment Needed

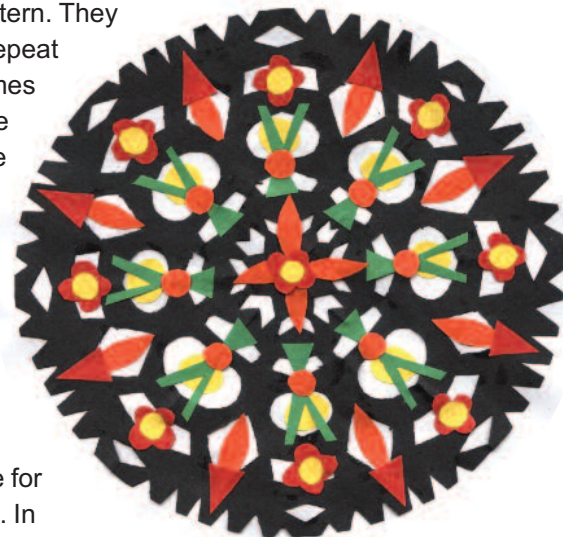
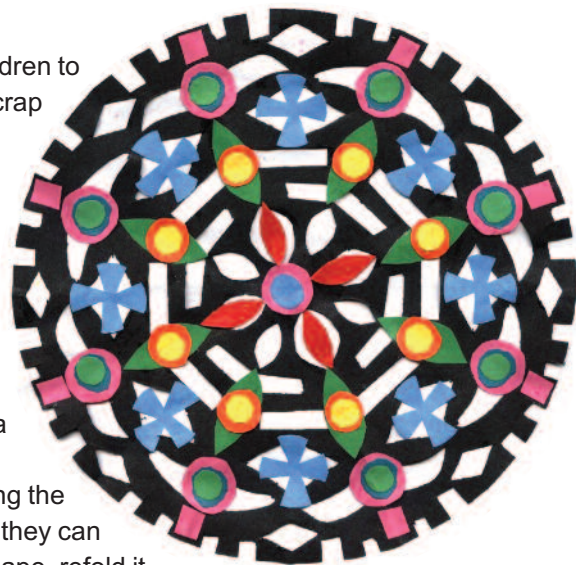
Squares and circles of black sugar paper (20 x 20 cm approx.), brightly-coloured sticky-paper, scissors, glue and squares of white or grey paper to stick the cut outs on. Scrap paper, again in circles and squares, as practice paper for cut out designs, examples of Polish paper cuts and doilies.

Talk About

- Where Poland is and the examples of Polish paper-cuts. Ask them to describe how the papercuts were made and what they were used for.
- The different shapes used to make the patterns on the doilies and how these shapes are repeated in the design.
- Folding paper and cutting shapes from the folds to make a pattern, remembering to leave enough of the fold intact so that the shape doesn't fall to pieces.
- Refolding the same shape in other ways and cutting out further shapes to elaborate the pattern.
- Cutting small shapes from the coloured paper to decorate the cut shape.
- Arranging these shapes in a repetitive order rather than at random to keep a mirror image.
- Sticking these shapes down, how much glue to use and where to put it.

Doing

- Ask the children to choose a scrap paper circle or square and to explore folding it in different ways before cutting out a series of shapes along the folds. Then they can open the shape, refold it differently and make further cuts to create a pattern. They may need to repeat this several times before they are ready to do the same with a black sugar paper circle or square.
- They choose a variety of coloured sticky-paper squares to use for the decoration. In order to have a repetition of similar shapes, they must fold each square several time before cutting through the layers. The coloured shapes are then arranged on the black paper cut-out.
- Once they are happy with their arrangement and have checked that the shapes repeat in the same way on each part of the cut out they need to stick them down. Although they are using sticky paper it would be advisable to stick the shapes down with glue to make sure they are securely fixed.



Display

Arrange the completed designs individually mounted on squares of white paper, in equally spaced rows like a grid across the board. Make sure the gaps between each piece is fairly narrow for maximum impact.

Patterns from Africa

Kente Cloth Patterns

Kente cloth of the Ashanti people of Africa represents their values, history and beliefs. Woven in narrow strips that are then sewn together, Kente cloth was originally reserved for royalty and its use limited to special occasions. Nowadays it is available to anyone who can afford it and although it is often machine printed it is still regarded as a symbol of nobility and social standing. Patterns and motifs are generally created by the weaver and are usually geometric representations of objects with a specific meaning. There are over 300 types of cloth designs. Colours also have specific meanings e.g. Yellow - royalty, wealth and vitality, Pink - calmness and tenderness, Red - sacrifice and struggle, Blue - good fortune and harmony, Green - growth and prosperity, Purple - healing, Black - links with ancestral spirits.

Equipment Needed

Pieces of coloured paper A4 size, brown or black pieces of A4 paper as a background, glue and examples of Kente cloth patterns from books and the Internet.

Talk About

- Where the cloth originates using a map of Africa.
- The patterns on the Kente cloth, how the colours and shapes are arranged and how they are repeated on alternate or adjacent rows.
- Tearing pieces of paper into long strips and short strips, thick strips and thin strips - old faded backing paper is ideal for practice pieces.
- Arranging the same colours and lengths in rows to make a repeating pattern.
- Arranging some of the strips horizontally and some vertically in the pattern.
- Sticking the strips down - how much glue to use and where to put it.

Doing

- Tell the children to choose the colours for their pattern - suggest they limit it to four or five to make it easier to repeat them in their design.
- They need to decide which colours are going to be torn into long strips and arranged in rows vertically and which ones are going to be torn into short strips and arranged horizontally. Also which strips are going to be thick and which are going to be thin.
- When they have torn several strips, suggest they arrange and stick these down on a piece of background paper as the first row of their pattern.

- They then arrange a second row in a different way and stick these pieces down next to the first row.
- They continue and complete their pattern, copying the shapes and colours from each row in the same order until the background paper is covered.

Display

Arrange the unmounted work as a block in the middle of the board surrounded with a border. Add the words 'Kente Cloth Patterns' several times on the border around the block. Display information about the patterns under the board.



Patterns from the Middle and Far East

Chinese Dragon Designs

Dragons are said to be the combination of several different animals including the wings of a bird, the scales of a snake, the head of a camel, the paws of a tiger and the horns of a deer. In China dragons are symbols of the natural world, having great power and representing strength, adaptability, and vitality. They are credited with transporting humans to the celestial realms after death. Chinese emperors think that they are the real dragons and their people are descendants of the dragon, thus the beds the emperors sleep on are called dragon beds, the throne is called the dragon seat and their ceremonial clothes are called the dragon robes. As well as a symbol used to decorate Chinese textiles and pottery, dragons feature in traditional dances and even special boat races.

Equipment Needed

Pieces of white card, scissors, pencils, scrap paper, glue, red and black felt tip pens, coloured paper, A4 coloured card, paint and cotton wool buds. Pictures of Chinese dragon designs from books and the Internet.

Talk About

- Where China is on a map of the world.
- What the dragons look like in the pictures - the shape of their heads, bodies, tails, legs etc.
- Stories they know that feature dragons.
- Drawing heads, legs, tails and bodies for a dragon in pencil on scrap paper before choosing which ones to combine and use for the outline of a whole dragon on a piece of white card.
- Cutting out their dragon shape and placing it on coloured card to use as a template to draw round.
- Adding details e.g. scales, eyes, teeth etc. using a black felt tip pen.
- Tearing thin strips from coloured paper.
- Printing dots with a cotton wool bud dipped in paint.

Doing

- The children make their rough sketches on scrap paper and then draw a complete dragon outline on white card.
- They cut it out carefully and place their dragon shape on the coloured card they have chosen as a background.
- They may want to try the outline on different parts of



the card before they trace round it in pencil. They may want to arrange it so that they can draw several dragons on the same piece of card.

- The children draw over the dragon outlines using red and black felt tip pens and add details such as scales, eyes, teeth etc.
- Decoration around the dragon shapes could be added either with a cotton bud dipped in paint or torn strips of coloured paper which are then glued down.



Display

Information about dragons and pictures of dragons could be displayed as a block in the middle of the board surrounded by the individual pieces of work, each mounted on black and arranged in equally spaced rows. Travel brochures about China and stories about dragons could be added next to or under the display.