

## ADDITIONAL NOTES: POTATO PRINT UNIT

The potato print project may be good for younger students, 12-14 year-olds. The latex block prints could be done as the introductory project to block printing as well.

Generally, students work at different speeds and with different inclinations. Class activities on all units I teach, are broken into four stages (all reflected in process journals): historic and cultural research, experimentation and skill assimilation, work on provisional compositions, and the final work. The pace of the work and the emphasis given to any part of the unit, depends on the student population and skill level. If there is not much historical research to be done on potato prints, there is certainly an historic record of decorative art using repeated patterns. There is also a good deal of YouTube material for potato printing and block printing in general.

I found it useful to give assignment schedules that listed the work I wanted to see in notebooks every few days. The schedule would be written for the whole unit and broken down into blocks of days. The assignment schedule would dictate the number of pages in journals, and what students needed to post. Even so, the work was highly individualized because students could approach research and experimentation on a wide variety of subjects and methods. And if they were short on notebook pages in the short term, they could add them as the project progressed. I am basing my teaching method on the IB Middle Years Program, and the IB Organization allows for the flexible use of time without hard deadlines.

On short projects like the potato print project, little more than two weeks is needed. But in that time, students have researched grid design patterns, learned to handle the equipment, tried several different motif ideas, and printed at least two reduction prints in a grid pattern.

An alternative to a strict schedule is an open studio where students have a copy of the assignment schedule, the instructions, the rubric, and they understand the vocabulary words. Under these conditions, students can be in control of their own time.