

Explorations
Visual and Performing Arts
Art Lesson
Grades 4-5



BEAN MOSAICS

Students will learn about mosaics as they create a bean mosaic using dry legumes and seeds.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- glue
- paintbrushes
- cardboard or any sturdy backing
- dry beans (kidney, black beans, peas, lentils etc.) of different colors and sizes

- pencils

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Draw a simple shape or figure on the cardboard. Keep the details down to a minimum. Simple is good for this project.
2. Paint glue in a small portion of the design. Note: Do not use too much glue if your cardboard is not sturdy. It will curl.
3. Place beans of different colors in the portion with glue.
4. Repeat for the entire picture.
5. The result is quite beautiful and the students will have a piece of art they are proud to display.

MOSAICS BACKGROUND:

Mosaics are made of tiny colored pieces of stone, pottery, glass or other materials, arranged together and set in plaster or cement to make patterns and images. They can be used to decorate a floor, a wall or in some cases a ceiling.

Mosaics have a long history. They were created in Ancient times in Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome. When the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum (which were buried under lava when Mount Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79) were rediscovered, many wonderful mosaics were found.

Ask your students to imagine, making a mosaic using over one million pieces of glass – all hand cut, and placed into wet plaster to create a large pattern for their entry hall! It is a project that would take months and in some cases even many years to complete.

For several centuries, interest in the making of mosaics declined. It wasn't until the 19th century, when architects started to look at old ideas for new inspirations, that the interest once again returned and mosaics began popping up in public buildings and private homes.