

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade: January**  
**Lesson 3: Tree Monoprint**  
**Printmaking**

**Objectives:** To create a monoprint of a tree by using basic printmaking techniques

**Technique:** Drawing and painting

**Set-up: (before lesson starts, docent and aides)**

*NOTE: This lesson requires organization and timely presentation in order to finish. Review the lesson, familiarize yourself with the process by reviewing the monoprint sample kit. You may practice, but do not use the plate from the sample kit. Enlist as many helpers as possible for this lesson.*

Newspaper to cover desks

Paper towels or napkins

Paint and brush caddy

Water containers

Paintbrushes: Medium round

Pencils

9" x 12" construction paper for tree sketch and background

8 ½" x 11" heavy white **cover (card)** stock paper for monoprint

Clear acrylic printing "plate"

Drafting tape to hinge cover (card) stock paper onto construction paper

Plates with the following colors: white, yellow, red, blue

Monoprint sample kit

**Visuals:**

Sample artwork

*Birch Trees*, Ansel Adams

Pictures of trees

The Monoprint Process

**Teaching the lesson: (1 hour, total)**

Give your aides a brief summary of the lesson

Introduce yourself and your aides

Today you will create a monoprint of a tree. Show Sample artwork. A monoprint is a print made by first painting an image on a smooth surface, such as glass or acrylic, and then transferring the painting onto paper. Each monoprint is a one of a kind work of art. And like a potato stamp or a rubber stamp, the print is a reverse image of the original artwork. Show visual, *Birch Trees*. Ansel Adams was a 20th-century photographer known for his black-and-white landscapes. He made an effort to preserve America's wilderness, and was associated with the Sierra Club. His focus on nature and landscapes revealed the simple beauty that can be found around us.

### Step 1: Plan (5 min)

Many trees in nature have a “skeleton”, or structure, shown in the trunk and branches. Show visual, Pictures of trees. In most cases, the trunk is much thicker than the branches. The branches gradually get smaller as they grow upward and outward. Note the way the structure of the tree determines its overall shape. For example, it is thick and mostly straight at the bottom (the trunk) and curves as it becomes taller. Choose a tree that is appealing to you and note:

- What (negative) shapes are created between the branches?
- How dense or lacy is the leaf canopy?
- What color is the trunk: Is it lavender or peachy green, or grey? (Many tree trunks are NOT brown.)

Use the demo kit to introduce the printmaking materials:

- The printing plate (acrylic plate)
- The background and sketch paper (9” x 12” construction paper)
- The printing paper (cover or card stock)
- Brush and Paints \*\*\*

\*\*\* Review Color mixing:

Yellow + Red = Orange

Orange + Blue = Brown, + white = tan

Yellow + Blue = Green, + a little red = warm green

White + Blue = Sky Blue

Red + Blue = Purple, + white = lavender

### Step 2: Registration (5 min)

(Registration means marking the placement of the acrylic plate onto the construction paper 9” x 12” background sheet.)

1. Place the white cover (card) stock paper on top of the larger construction paper background sheet, so that it is centered from top to bottom, and aligned on the right side.
2. Use a strip of drafting tape to tape down the cover (card) stock paper along its left edge attaching it to the construction paper.
3. With pencil, mark the top, bottom, and left side of the cover (card) stock paper on the larger construction paper background sheet.
4. Open the cover (card) stock paper out of the way as if it is a page of a book (like a hinge), being careful not to pull up the tape.
5. Place the acrylic plate on the construction paper, centered within the pencil lines and right side of the paper, so there is an equal margin around the plate.
6. Trace the acrylic plate. These are the “registration” marks for your print. Remove plate.

### Step 3: Draw (5 min)

*Note: This drawing is only a guideline, none of it will show in the end. Students are very anxious to make a perfect tree drawing, but that is not the point of the lesson.*

1. With a pencil, draw a favorite tree on larger construction paper inside the registration marks of the acrylic plate. Keep it simple; avoid small detail. Encourage branches and leaves to extend to, or even outside, the pencil lines.

**Step 4: Paint** (25-30 min—process to repeat a few times)

*Note: The tempera paint can dry fairly quickly on the plate. The painting and printing needs to be done without too much delay. If the paint doesn't transfer completely, it can always be repainted on the plate (without cleaning off the dry paint) and reprinted.*

1. Show and display visual, The Monoprint Process, for the remainder of the lesson.
2. Place acrylic plate over the drawing, lining it up with its own “registration” markings on the construction paper.
3. PAINT the acrylic “plate” using the line drawing below it as a guide. (Always keep the plate centered, or “REGISTERED” over its corner markings so the print will be in position every time it is printed with more layers of color.)
4. Paint one shape or area at a time so it is still wet when it is printed.
5. This Painting Step and the Printing Step (below) will be repeated over and over; to build layers of color, to adjust shapes, and eventually paint the entire plate.

**Step 5: Print and “Pull”** (10-15 min—process to repeat a few times)

*Note: the plate does not need to be cleaned between pulls. Leaving the used paint on the plate will help the artists see where more paint needs to be reapplied.*

(While the paint is still WET)

1. Check that the plate is aligned with its registration marks.
2. Carefully close the white cover (card) stock paper over the WET plate.
3. Firmly rub the back of the paper over the wet plate.
4. Carefully “PULL” the white cover (card) stock paper off the plate as if opening a fragile book. It will stay attached to the backing with the hinged tape.
5. Repeat, repainting areas of the print as needed for color depth and detail. Print and re-pull, ALWAYS keeping acrylic plate “registered” over master drawing so every layer of paint is in alignment with the last.
6. When printing is complete, help students carefully remove the drafting tape from the print.
7. Sign name, give a title and share

**Clean-up: (after the lesson ends, docent and aides)**

Close the lesson, clean up the classroom

Thoroughly rinse all paint out of brushes, store in containers with bristles up

Thoroughly wash and **DRY** acrylic plates

Rinse and dry water containers

Return all materials to bin and caddy

Return all materials to the art closet

Ask teacher where to store artwork

Arrange time with teacher to display artwork



Sample artwork



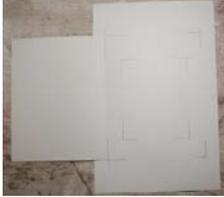
*Birch Trees, Ansel Adams*



Pictures of trees

**The Monoprint Process:**

1. Paint the tree trunk and main branches.
2. Check registration of plate.
3. Carefully close the black paper over the monoprint and rub firmly over plate.
4. Carefully “Pull” the print (STEP 5, from above)
5. Look at the print. Did enough paint transfer to the paper? It can be repainted and reprinted as needed.
6. Paint the rest of the tree and the background of the composition. (STEP 4, from above)
7. Repeat steps 2, 4 & 5 of this sequence. The beauty of this method is the ability to adjust, repaint, and reprint.

The Monoprint Process		
	Registered and Hinged	Closed View
		
The drawing	Ready to paint	Mix a beautiful trunk color
		
Ready to print	Print by Rubbing	Pulling first layers
		
Pulling first leaf layer	Painting another leaf layer	Painting first sky “shape”
		
		

Paint, Print, Pull some more	Final Print	Title and sign name
------------------------------	-------------	---------------------